

2
The Trial of Spirits.

O R, A
TREATISE
UPON THE
NATURE, OFFICE,
AND
OPERATIONS
OF THE
Spirit of Truth.

By JAMES RELLY. *K*

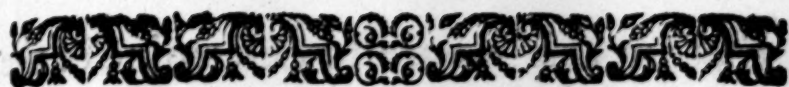
THE SECOND EDITION.

He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own Glory: but he that seeketh His Glory that sent him, the same is true, and no Unrighteousness is in him, JOHN vii. 18.

L O N D O N:

by M. LEWIS, in Paternoster-Row. 1762.





T H E
P R E F A C E
T O T H E
C H R I S T I A N R E A D E R .

HAVING very minutely and impartially examined my motives in writing the following discourse: the testimony of my conscience is, that my sole aim was the honour and glory of Jesus Christ. Therefore, can I, with calmness and confidence, commit what I have written ; unto His protection and blessing.

My endeavour, through the whole, hath been to shew, that all the works of God, and all His ways with man conspire to glorify Jesus Christ ; and
A 2 that

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that by this we are to determine of the true and false spirits.

In the prosecution of this, I hope I have not seemed as one assuming oracular authority, nor given myself any majesterial airs, or positive beyond demonstration; forasmuch as I would carefully avoid this in all things, as that which my soul abhors. How fully I have escaped it, and how closely adhered to the scriptures for proof of what I have written, and that not according to forced explications, but according to their literal import, and what may rationally be drawn thence, I shall leave the reader to determine.

And as I would not darken counsel by words without knowledge, I have aimed at rendering my ideas intelligible, and that with as much plainness of speech as my capacity would admit of; hence I may have used more words and repetitions than will appear
needful

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needful to fundry of my readers; but I hope the intention will atone for the defect in this particular.

If it shall be thought, I have spoken a little too freely of mankind, where (attempting to discover the imposture they put upon themselves and others through pretensions to extraordinary holiness) I describe their fruits; I here declare, it proceeded not from a cynical principle, or spirit, towards them in general, nor from any personal pique to particulars; but, from candid and impartial observations, with self-evident experience, I was assured of the truth thereof; and thought it necessary for staining the pride of all flesh, and for the honour and glory of Jesus Christ our only Lord and Saviour, to speak as I have done, with earnestness and sincerity.

Whoever is dissatisfied therewith, and fain would prove me a false witness;

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ness; I here tell them plainly, there is but one way to do it; and that is, by shunning all the evils I have mentioned, and by bringing forth with a constancy the contrary fruit.

And when they do this in truth and sincerity, Jesus will be glorified, and I will acknowledge my self a false witness: but until then, mere speculative argument and disputes, will not prove me such: but, with all their bitter invectives against me, it will plainly demonstrate the truth of what I affirm.

I am very well aware, that, where I have spoken slightly of the supposed holiness of man; their learning, wisdom and popularity, as tending to deceive, and through a false spirit, entice souls from Christ; from beholding their righteousness and strength in Him: it will be objected, that my own deficiency, makes me speak thus contemptuously of the opposite character:
But

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But let me here affirm, I envy no man the character of being holy, wise, learned, or popular; nor have I for years past desired it. I am very sensible that men of this character are set in slippery places, and too commonly rival Jesus Christ in the heart and affections of the children of men. And withal, being very well apprised of the pride and vanity of human nature, and how well men like to have it so: I look upon it as a really dangerous situation, and very derogatory to the honour and glory of Jesus, who saith unto all what he says to one, *My son, give me thy heart*. But forasmuch as this withholds the heart from Him, and makes men swallow, without trial, whatsoever is imposed upon them; I would set myself against it, and speak of it as I think it deserves, when it comes in competition with the Saviour of the body. And, if I am of the contrary character, I have the less to fear from this quarter, as not being likely to adul-

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terate the affections of the spouse of Christ, or to proselyte the souls of men to my person or excellencies, to which I have an utter, yea an irreconcilable aversion, and am persuaded my behaviour testifies it, as hating affectation, grimace, and fawning.

Having endeavoured, in this discourse, to prove the scriptures the rule for the trial of spirits, by the same rule I desire my doctrine may be tried, and not by the traditions, confessions of faith, and creeds of men (for by these, I doubt not, I shall be condemned.) I am persuaded the scriptures will acquit me, therefore to them I appeal; and where they will not justify me, I am content to acknowledge that I err, as not knowing the scriptures: but this I know, I am at peace with them all, and have not, in this treatise, wilfully injured one of them. Let me therefore earnestly beseech the reader to compare me with them, and to try the

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the spirit speaking in me by them, and if they declare themselves in its favour, is there, who calls himself christian, that will reject it, because it may be deemed contrary to the received maxims and traditions of men? are such protestants? what ever their profession is, are they christians? do not they prefer man to Jesus Christ, yea, make the witness of man to be greater than the witness of God? and is not this monstrous impiety? and O how shocking the thought, the masters in Israel will not attempt to undeceive them: whatever *gain* they may have from this quarter it is certain there is no real *godliness* in it.

I expect, when this book shall fall into the hands of *some* persons, they will immediately look into the title-page for the author's name; it being usual with them, if prejudiced in favour of an author, to read him with care, respecting many things therein as
very

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very great, though probably far from meriting the admiration of any one. But, if the author appear to be one of whom they have before received an ill opinion, they will either throw it by and not look into it at all, or, if they read, prejudice and ill-nature makes them unreasonable criticks, they gather what they judge faulty therein, and treasure it up with joy; that by blazing it abroad, they may bring, if possible, the whole into disrepute. And, as to what they find therein truly great, they will endeavour to think it error: but if the truth thereof is too manifest for them to think so, then will they insinuate that it is only speculation, because they will not have the writer to be an experienced christian, or to be directed by the Spirit of Truth in what he writes, and therefore, that there ought not to be any regard paid to his writings. How ungenerous, tyrannical, and cruel this way of acting is, every man's reason

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son will teach him, if he calmly attend unto it! therefore, unto reason I appeal: And how contrary it is to Christ and the Spirit of his gospel, the scriptures will testify: where all such partial and uncharitable proceedings are continually reprov'd and censured as a false and antichristian spirit, yea such a spirit, that none who truly walk with Jesus, can possibly be led by.

Therefore reader, if as a man thou wouldst behave humane, generous, and reasonable, and as a christian, impartial, charitable and faithful; I recommend this tract unto thee; give it a fair reading, nor do thou despise the treasure: because in an earthen vessel; but learn to distinguish the treasure from the vessel. And think not with thyself, that where there is a fine vessel there must certainly be precious treasures; but remember the word of the Lord, how that he hath
chosen

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*chosen the foolish to confound the wise,
and the weak to confound the mighty,
and the base, and the despised hath God
chosen; and things which are not, to
bring to nothing things which are.*

This I leave with thee as my best
advice, and pray our good Lord to
seal instruction upon thee by what
thou readest.



The



T H E

Trial of Spirits.

I JOHN IV. I.

Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they be of God.

T HIS scripture briefly contains the divine caution and advice of an apostle unto the Church of Christ. *Beloved*, a proof he cautioned not from contracted bowels, an ill-natured, or uncharitable principle—*believe not every spirit*; a plain indication that the false spirits require our belief; yea, truly they have their signs and lying wonders—but *try the spirits*. This supposeth man liable to err in this particular, but withal that we have a rule whereby to determine, to which we do well to give heed as unto a light shining in a dark place. *Whether they be of God*; an intimation, that there

there are spirits which bear his name, and work an appearance of piety, whom he acknowledgeth not; and when tried, to be rejected by us.

The Words naturally afford this doctrine: there is a rule given for the trial of spirits, whereby, if we impartially determine, we may know whether they be of God, or not.

In treating of this, I shall

First, Point out the rule, or standard, fixed for the trial of spirits.

Secondly, Shew the manner of trying the spirits by this rule. And

Thirdly, Attempt some suitable use and improvement of the whole.

Either there is a rule for the trial of spirits, or there is not; if not, all have the same force of argument in asserting their being of God, however different and contrary to each other in nature, work, or testimony; to grant which, would be at once to conclude God the author of confusion, and to father, not only all the corrupt fallies of the human mind, but all the lies and inconsistencies of the wicked one upon Him: to banish all order and unanimity out of the society of man, to open a gap for doubtfulness, uncertainty, yea, infidelity, with
all

all its train of arrogance and horrors, to break in like a deluge upon us.—As this must be obvious to every seeing eye, the necessity of a rule to try the spirits by, will abundantly appear. If objected, that this is to suppose the spirit inferior to the rule, and that his testimony without this is fallible and uncertain.—I answer, the sign is not greater than the thing signified: it is the spirit of truth himself who hath given us the rule as a transcript of his own nature, office, and operations, whereby we are to determine with certainty of him, as distinguished from every false spirit. And with respect to the witness of the true spirit; the rule for the trial of spirits is so far from denying its infallibility, as rather with constancy to assert it, being a second witness of the same thing, as descriptive of what is the matter of the spirit's testimony.—To this end hath the spirit himself given it us; and that we might oppose it to every spirit which answers not to the description. Besides, it will be always true in this world, that the heir, whilst a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though lord of all. And this being the case, they know not what manner of spirit they are of: such was the condition of those whom our Saviour reprov'd on that account; and all of like character may need the trial of spirits for their reproof. Withal, the trial of spirits by the rule appointed for that purpose, as it will give the descriptive character of the spirit of truth, may be of use for edification to such
who,

who, though they are in a measure under his influence, have not attained, with certainty, to know his voice. True it is, those who have received the perfect witness need no trial thereof for their own satisfaction, because they know His voice; as he, with unerring evidence, bears His witness to their heart: however, it is pleasing and delightful to them, when they consider the trial of spirits; that the spirit of truth is pointed out and described, in his nature, office, and operations, as they have conceived and known of him in the heart. Moreover, if they would demonstrate to others, that they are led and speak by the true spirit, they must do it by this rule, as that which is appointed of God; otherwise, they ought not to censure, where their testimony is rejected.— And this, I think, the apostle's advice chiefly tends to, where he bids us try the spirits whether they be of God; hence we have authority to deny that spirit's being of God which doth not speak and act according to this rule and standard.

The rule or standard, which infinite wisdom hath fixed for the trial of spirits is the holy scriptures, containing the writings of the prophets and apostles. *To the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them, Isa. viii. 20.*

As to the divinity of this rule we have proof sufficient from reason and revelation. From reason, where the prophecies speaking of the destruc-

destruction and revolutions of kingdoms, &c. describing the persons, yea pointing them out by name who should execute it, with other particular circumstances, and that some hundred years before hand, or ever the persons spoken of were born, hath yet notwithstanding been literally fulfilled in all particulars, according to the testimony of the Heathen writers themselves. What ever definitions of true virtue have been given, by the most famous theorists of any age, are but so many faint imitations of the scripture perfection. The most refined philosopher, drinking at this fountain, will find his ideas enlarged, enlightened, and quickened, and be able thereby to improve upon the most rational and sublime ethic that ever the wit or reason of man produced. Nor hath the evil and deformity of vice been ever painted with like perfection as in the holy writings, nor are there any motives so powerfully persuasive and exciting to virtue as here are found; yea, many things here are incontestibly proved evil, which borrowed the name of virtue among the wisest Heathens: virtue and vice, with them, was, as the stream or Nile among the Egyptians, abundantly obvious as present with them, whilst the spring or fountain-head remained a secret. But in the scripture, the rise and cause of each is assigned and opened to our view. Who is that divine Being, whom the Heathen acknowledge and ignorantly worship, but that God who hath revealed himself to man in the

scriptures? What is the cause of the apparent evil bias and depravity of human nature universally acknowledged and confessed in the world? there is nothing so truly and rationally points it out as the scriptures, in the offence of our first parents. What are the sacrifices which all nations under heaven use, or have used, in their various religions, but an acknowledging the necessity of sacrifice to reconcile God and man? though what this sacrifice was, they neither knew nor were agreed upon: the scriptures only can shew this, in their testimony of the suffering Jesus. What are those faint acknowledgments of nature, but that sound which, the scripture says, is gone to the ends of the earth? All the predictions of the prophets concerning the promised Messiah have been exactly fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the author of the New Testament: yea, all the whole system of the Jewish religion, however fabulous and trivial many parts thereof might seem to the eye of reason, hath its witness in the person, life, death, and resurrection of the holy Jesus, as the antitype and substance of the whole. Beside, it might be urged for the divinity of the scripture, that never book was wrote like it: with so much honesty, self-denial, and disinterestedness in the writers. All such, who go about to deceive their fellow-creatures and impose upon them in matters of religion, do it under a profession of extraordinary sanctity: they conceal their own faults, and as much as

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lieth in them the faults of all who are of their party, lest the goodness of their cause should be suspected. What man is there who, when he publishes his life to the world, will publish his faults and miscarriages? while he is picking out all the flowers thereof to oblige the world with a nosegay, will he present them with his stinking weeds also? nay, he is cautious of that; and therefore whilst he speaks of his good works and dispositions, he says nothing of his evil ones, except in general terms, that he is a worthless creature, or the like; but this confession is designed to evidence his goodness by his humility; or, probably he will acknowledge some abominations in particular which he has been guilty of, but then it was in the days of ignorance, and the like, before his conversion. This confession is designed still as a foil to set him off to admiration, as though he had not sinned, had not been guilty of faults since he commenced a christian. But this was not the case with those who wrote the scriptures; they confessed themselves men of like passions with others; they published their own faults, and the faults of such who with them were the heroes of the cause; and did not, in general terms *only*, acknowledge their worthlessness. Furthermore, they published their faults not only as committed in times of ignorance, but after they were eminent for religion, the knowledge and worship of the true God, and truly their faults were none of the least.

Now, had it been their design to impose upon mankind by their writings, or to aggrandize themselves in any shape, it would have been the greatest madness and folly in them, to set themselves upon a level as they did, with the meanest of the people: to publish their own faults, and such that were so heinous, committed by them even while they were prophets and apostles: they could not have taken a more unreasonable and unlikely method, had they sought themselves, and their own glory: nor can it be objected that it proceeded from their foolishness, for their writings evidence they wanted not understanding: it is therefore sufficiently apparent, that those writings were wholly dictated by the Spirit of God; and, that the writers thereof wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: and not as they were moved by interest, vain glory, or self-seeking in any respect. The holy scriptures are writings that do not favour of the things of men, but of the things which are of God, as may rationally be gathered from the foregoing hints. This, and much more, I might offer as reasonable proof of the scriptures divine original: but, as all who believe the Bible, are not called upon to consider these things as the ground of their faith therein, there is yet to them more certain proof by revelation; where the Spirit of Truth opens the scriptures, and bears witness to their conscience of their divinity; upon the simple credit of which witness, the mind is fully persuaded,

suaded, and is not suffered to call the truth in question, else what shall they do, who being illiterate and incapable of argument, are ignorant of reasonable proof respecting this matter? reason and divinity forbids our thinking as those superstitious bigots, who denounced anathema's on all such that knew not their law; nay, notwithstanding their ignorance, they are capable, by the grace of God, of knowing and believing whatever is requisite for their salvation and comfort.

The holy scriptures thus known, are always to be considered as the rule given us for the trial of spirits: Search the scriptures, said He, in whom is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, for they testify of me. And the Holy Ghost commends it in the Bereans as a noble act, that they tried the spirit, speaking in the apostles themselves, by the scriptures, Acts xvii. 11.

Having thus pointed out the rule whereby we are to try the spirits, I shall proceed to treat of the method thereof. As it would be endless to bring every false spirit seperately to its trial, and would render my writing on the subject too voluminous; I shall by this rule attempt a description of the Spirit of Truth in His nature, office, and operations: by which means every false spirit will be at once searched out and detected.

Whilst treating of the nature of the Spirit of Truth, I shall not presume to propose it meta-

physically of his being and essence, for, besides my incapacity for such an arduous task, He Himself assures us, that none, by searching, can find him out to perfection, Job xi. 7; shall therefore rather confine myself to the consideration of Him according to His properties and dispositions, as revealed in the scriptures.

As a tree is known by its fruit, so also is the Spirit of Truth—and *the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*, Gal. v. 22. *For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth*, Eph. v. 9.

Hence we discern somewhat of the native properties and dispositions of the Spirit of Truth; it is love, free, pure, unchangeable, everlasting, *which suffereth long, is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, becometh not itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, never faileth*. *Whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things*, Phil. iv. 8. For this is the fruit of the Spirit, and a specimen of his divine nature. The Spirit is described as the life and quickening of mankind to everlasting happiness; therefore called, *The Spirit of Life*, Rom. viii. 2. Again, it is said, *the Spirit giveth Life*, 2 Cor. iii. 6.
and

and that the *Spirit of Life* entered into the slain witnesses, Rev. xi. 11. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth*, John vi. 63. From whence it appears the property of the Spirit to give life.

Again. The Spirit is said to *enlighten the eyes of our understanding*, Eph. i. 18. *In him was life, and this life was the light of men*, John i. 14. it being the property of the Spirit to enlighten.

Furthermore, the Spirit is compared to water—with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation, Isa. xii. 3. *For, in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert*, Isa. xxxv. 6. *Jesus stood and cried, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me, as the scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: but this spake He of the Spirit, &c.* John vii. 37, 38, 39. *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring*, Isa. xlv. 3. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. *That he might sanctify; and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*, Eph. v. 26. Hence we learn the nature and property of the Spirit is to cleanse from all filthiness, as water; and by his comfortable influence to allay the thirst of panting souls.

Moreover, the Spirit is likened to fire—*He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*, Matt. iii. 11. *There appeared cloven tongues like as of fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*, Acts ii. 3. *The fire shall try every*

man's work, of what sort it is, 1 Cor. iii. 13. the nature and property of the Spirit, as fire, is to purify from all dross, to burn up and consume every false work.

Again, the Spirit is compared to wind—*awake O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out, Cant. iv. 16. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit, John iii. 8. Thus, as wind, the nature of the Spirit is to refresh by his gracious influences.*

Having briefly considered the nature, and properties of the Spirit of Truth according to the scriptures, I hasten to treat of His office, in that relation wherein it concerns mankind.

When our Saviour was about to leave the world, lest his disciples should be overcharged with sorrow, he promised them another Comforter, whom he called the Spirit of Truth; and lest they should be fearful of this promised Comforter, that he would promote an interest contrary to what they had already engaged in, he assures them, that when this Spirit came, he would not speak of himself—*when the Spirit of Truth is come he will guide you into all Truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you, John xvi. 13, 14. He that speaketh of himself,*

himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him, John vii. 18.

From hence it appears, that the proper office of the Spirit of Truth, is to glorify Jesus: and this He doth by speaking of Him, and shewing us the things which are His; and not by speaking of himself.

For our better understanding in this important matter, I shall endeavour

First, To shew what is intended by a spirit speaking of himself. And

Secondly, What by the Spirit of Truth shewing us the things of Christ, and speaking of him only, which according to the word is his proper office.

For a spirit to speak of himself by man, is when he makes it his business to take of the learning, wisdom, eloquence, honour, or piety of man, and shew it to the world, thereby seeking his own glory: and this he doth when from this principle men labour to be admired, and aim at ensnaring their fellow creatures on these accounts.

Again. The spirit speaks of himself in man; and consequently seeks his own glory; when he leads us to eye his impulse, operation, or work, as the object of our faith,
and

and foundation of our hope : when the spirit by which we are govern'd in matters of religion, in order to witness his being of God, leads us to consider his impulse on the mind ; from whence, through the working of the passions, flow sudden transports of joy, sorrow, love, desire, &c. and would thence persuade us of our being possess'd of the Spirit of Truth ; this spirit evidently speaks of himself, and seeks his own glory, and not the glory of Christ.

Again, When the spirit which is in man, would lead him to any change, as wrought within him ; consisting in habit and principle ; or to any reformation of life and manners, taking an occasion thence to speak peace to his mind, as unto one who is under the work and government of the spirit ; I say, when this is the case, it is manifestly a spirit which speaks of himself.

That spirit who insinuates that he is injured by the preaching of Christ *only* ; (as where the testimony of free and compleat salvation in Jesus Christ, is accused of denying, or slighting the work of the Spirit) may be said to speak of himself, and seek his own glory ; it is evident he is in a seperate interest from the Lord Jesus, and therefore cannot be the Spirit of Truth.

Above all, that spirit which denieth that Jesus is come in the flesh, is of antichrist ; by which, as I think, we are not to understand, a denial of his incarnation only, or his having a body of flesh, but a denial of his having answer-
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ed the end of his coming in the flesh; which was to evidence the love of God to mankind, to take away their sin, and to save them with an everlasting salvation: this is in effect to deny that Jesus is come in flesh.

I shall not particularly consider that spirit, who not only professes equal infallibility with him who dictated the holy scriptures; but a right to contradict them, where they clash with its suggestions: as mistaken, and untrue; or else as containing a lower dispensation of matters; and therefore that his light, and affirmations, are preferable to what is taught in the Bible. This spirit refuses to stand trial by the Scriptures; therefore, I have nothing to do but to warn all against this spirit: because there is no end of the evil and danger he will lead men into: a mischievous, lying spirit, pretending authority for all his evil works.

I am persuaded that as many as believe the scriptures; where they tell us, that when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will not speak of himself, nor seek his own glory; but the glory of Christ; by receiving the things which are his, and shewing them unto us; will acknowledge, that in all the instances I have mentioned, the spirit speaketh of himself, and seeketh his own glory, and therefore is not the Spirit of Truth.

The Spirit of Truth, when He is come, will glorify Christ, by receiving of the things which are His, and shewing them unto us: He leads not the sons of God to view any impulse, operation,

ration, or work wrought in them, nor any thing wrought by them, thro' His power, as the foundation of their faith, or matter of their comfort; nor, will he suffer them to gather the least confidence thence; but it is His nature and office to speak only of Him that sent him. It is to *Jesus* He leads; and points Him out perpetually, as made of God unto us, whatever we want or stand in need of. Whatever influence we feel; whatever change, or reformation is produced in us by the Spirit's testimony of *Jesus*; or whatever we are enabled thereby to do, or suffer for Him; the Spirit of Truth is so far from speaking of it to us, or from once presenting it to our view, that he faithfully leads us off from all apprehension or trust therein, and is constantly employed in shewing us the things of *Jesus* and glorifying Him.

By the things of Christ, I would understand the mystery of His Person, birth, life, sufferings, death and resurrection; with all the grace and glory abounding in Him: yea, all those things which tend to manifest Him to mankind, as lovely, valuable, precious, and glorious; under every consideration endearing him unto the souls of men.

By the Spirit receiving of those things, I conceive, is intended the ministry of the Holy Ghost, in this particular: all the glory of what our Saviour was, and did, in the flesh, the Spirit of Truth is now commissioned and sent to reveal unto the children of men.

In the day of his humiliation, his judgment was taken away; and there were none to declare his generation. His own disciples were offended because of him; they stumbled at his unknown sorrows, his shameful and bloody death: nor could they bear the many things which he had to say to them; neither understood they when he spake to them of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Though all these things were then done and spoken by our Saviour, yet the explication of all was reserved for the administration of the Spirit—But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you, John xiv. 26.

Thus hath the Spirit of Truth received in trust, the fulness of the mystery of Jesus, to manifest unto mankind; therefore it is said, he shall receive of the things which are mine, and shall shew them unto you. I am aware of this objection, the Spirit is said to convince, regenerate, &c. and that this is appointed him as part of his office, as well as that of shewing us the things of Christ: I answer, whatsoever may properly be called a work of the Spirit, is wrought by his glorifying Jesus, and shewing us the things that are his. And where ever any work of the Spirit can be distinguished from this, we must be excused when we deny that spirit and his work, as one who speaketh of himself; and therefore false, as the scriptures are true.

Indeed

Indeed the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, when he is come, will reprove or convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The scripture expressly says, *He reproveth of sin*; what sin? Unbelief, says Jesus—*of sin, because they believe not in me*. It is not the office of the law, as naturally in us, nor as revealed from Sinai, to convince of the sin of unbelief; this is the work and office of the Spirit of Truth. Unbelief lurks and gathers its strength under the shadow of the law: unbelief joins itself in affinity with the law principle in our nature, yea agrees with it in numbering the manifold imperfections thereof, taking occasion from a consciousness of sin to strengthen itself, and to fill its mouth with arguments against the grace of God, whilst its own nature and sinfulness is still unknown: but when the Spirit of Truth comes, manifesting Jesus in the fulness of his grace and glory, unbelief is detected, and the evil nature thereof declared as making God a liar, believing not the record which he hath given of his Son, how that he *hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*, 1 John v. 10, 11. in this the Spirit speaketh not of himself, but of Christ: shewing that the sin of unbelief consists in a rejection of him; nor can the world be convinced of it until the Spirit of Truth reveal it, by shewing them the things of Christ, manifesting, in the fulness of his grace and glory, that Jesus whom they had rejected.

The Spirit also reproves of righteousness and judgment—of *righteousness*, said the Saviour, *because I go to the Father*; intimating that he could not have been accepted of the Father, had he not fulfilled the law, atoned for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. But forasmuch as he is gone to the Father, the Spirit of Truth will shew from thence that he hath fulfilled all righteousness; and is therefore accepted and received into glory. Hence man is convinced of the insufficiency of his own righteousness and the all-sufficiency of Christ's—*of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged*. This judgment to condemnation passed upon him in the death of Jesus, where mankind were delivered out of his toils, and he judged and condemned as their deceiver. All this doth the Spirit of Truth teach us by shewing us the things of Christ, and glorifying him.

The regeneration, or renewing in the spirit of our mind, ascribed to the Holy Ghost as his work and office, is wrought also by the revelation of the Son of God; that is, by discovering to us the redemption which is in his blood, the forgiveness of sins; we are delivered from the guilt and slavery of sin, and brought into a new state, where *old things are done away, and all things are become new*, 2 Cor. v. 17. For as our nature was regenerated and born anew in Christ Jesus, through whose sufferings and blood it was *purged* from all sin, Heb. i. 3.

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reconciled unto God, Col. i. 21, 22. and fully conformed to his Image, Rom. viii. 29. the Spirit of Truth receives of this and shews it unto us; withall witnessing our interest therein, as those whom Christ personated in all that he did and suffered: by this means, *being dead unto the law, we are married unto another, even to him who is risen from the dead*, that we might bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4. Hence we have the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 21. As the Spirit of Truth shews us this, he, by teaching and enabling us to resolve our all into Jesus, authorizes the conscience to appropriate his condition, his righteousness, holiness, yea all his gracious qualities and full conformity to God, until we come to the language of the apostle, who says, *as he is, so are we in this present world*, 1 John iv. 17. Thus doth the things of Jesus which are shewn us by the Holy Ghost attract and draw the soul until we wholly leave ourselves, and are found in Him, Phil. iii. 9. In him we are put in possession of a new and clean heart, new desires, new will, new affections, a new consciousness of ourselves, which is not after the old Adam, but after him who is risen from the dead. By this new and spiritual birth we pass out of darkness into light, yea translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, Col. i. 13. where *being born of God we cannot sin*, because the immortal remaining seed is pure, 1 John iii. 9.

iii. 9. In all this the Spirit of Truth glorifies Jesus, as him in whom we are regenerated, born anew and changed, being *God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which he hath before ordained, that we should walk in them*, Eph. ii. 10. According to this grace, the Spirit of Truth reveals Christ in the heart through a gradual manifestation, and as we discern him from faith to faith; he teaches us to put him on, Rom. xiii. 14. until we come *unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, Eph. iv. 13. This is a wonderful and great change, and is thus described in the scriptures: *We all, with once face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Thus whatever the Spirit worketh for the salvation, and comfort of mankind, is all wrought by his shewing us the things of Christ, and testifying of him that he might be glorified. He shews us the mystery of the person of Jesus, as God-man, Rom. ix. 5. as *Emmanuel, or God with us*, Matt. i. 23. and how that we, as the church, are *the fulness of him that filleth all in all*, Eph. i. 23. *Members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, Eph. v. 30. *Heirs of God, and joint-heirs of Christ*, Rom. viii. 17.

Being thus interested *in*, and related to the human nature of our Lord, we are together *in* and *with* that nature related unto God; the union of natures in him, being that marriage-union,

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where our *Maker is our Husband*, Isa. liv. 5. that blessed and eternal life of ours, which *is hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3.

Again, the Spirit is said to bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God, Rom. viii. 16. and in this also he glorifies Christ. The matter of this witness is, that God *hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*, 1 John v. 11. That he died for our sins, *and was raised again for our justification*, Rom. iv. 25. and hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, Heb. ix. 26. hath by one offering perfected for ever, them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us, Heb. x. 14, 15. His argument is the faithfulness and truth of him who hath spoken it; and being infinite in wisdom, and in power omnipotent, he can overthrow the enemies of our peace, and persuade our hearts beyond all uncertainty and doubtfulness. Thus doth he witness our sonship, and withal, shew us the method of it as by one Lord Jesus. To bear which witness from any work of our own hands, from any reformation, or change wrought upon us, from any frame, or disposition within us, or from any light, knowledge, &c. would be to deny the Lord that bought us; to run counter to his religion, to walk by sight and not by faith; to make the spirit speak of himself, and not of him that sent him: but the witness of the Spirit of Truth is known by its agreement with the scriptures, which teach that we *have the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ*, Eph. i. 5. arguing the
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reality and security of this grace, from the truth, faithfulness, and unchangeableness of Him who gave it us. *I am the Lord, and I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed*, Mal. iii. 6. *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever*, Heb. xiii. 8. and such is the persuasive power and force of this witness, thro' illumination, influence and argument, that all our reasonings and unbelieving objections fall before him; and its tyranny ceasing, the conscience is brought into a state of purity and peace, not staggering through unbelief, but *believing in hope against hope*, Rom. iv. 18. that is, whilst from a deep conviction of the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness of the heart, Jer. xvii. 9. reason and sense deny all ground of hope from ourselves, yea would rather urge our despair: The Spirit of Truth points out Jesus to us in all his fulness, and suitableness to our necessities, witnessing our interest therein, and that with such almighty power, that we believe in hope of what the Spirit testifies concerning Jesus, against the hopeless and desperate views we should have of ourselves, were we to judge ourselves by ourselves, or to compare ourselves with ourselves: thus whilst in the world, and in ourselves, we have tribulation, we have peace and joy in the beloved Jesus. From all which, the truth of this proposition still appears, it is the office of the Spirit of Truth to glorify Christ.

I come now to the third thing proposed, the consideration of the Spirit of Truth in his operations;

rations ; it is compared by our Saviour to the wind : *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou bearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit,* John iii. 8. it bloweth where it listeth, denoting the free agency of the Spirit in his operations, as not obligated thereto by any human power, nor to be resisted thereby when he will work.

As we are in no wise conducive to the winds blowing, neither are we to the Spirit's operations ; we merit it not ; nor is our wisdom, diligence, or faithfulness, any inducement thereto ; to hasten, increase or strengthen it : for it bloweth where it listeth, *when it will, and on whom it will* : sometimes on such *who seek him not*, Isa. lxxv. 7. passing by many who were in search *after the law of righteousness*, Rom. ix. 31. Thus taking occasion to baffle the wisdom and abase the pride of all flesh, plainly evidencing, that human excellencies and abilities are of no advantage in this particular ; declaring it impossible for man, by the best observations he is capable of making, to point out by an unexceptionable rule, the person qualified and prepared as a proper object of the Spirit's operations,

The operations of the Spirit are unlimited : sometimes by the word, as where he makes use of any portion of the scripture, thereby to reveal the things of Jesus to the heart. The application of the promise, by the Spirit, is a customary

customary phrase amongst such who profess christianity, and to be feared, often used ignorantly: it is probable, that many who use it, understand nothing more by it, than that when some particular text of scripture coming to their remembrance stirs them up to sorrow, joy, gladness, &c. from the consideration of which influence, they persuade themselves of its being applied by the Spirit, and so rest thereon. I need not be at much expence of time, or argument, to shew that this is not the Spirit of Truth; because he neither reveals Jesus, nor *speaks* of him, but suffers the mind to rest in that influence it felt on the remembrance of the literal word.

Again, when the promise is conditional, and requires certain qualifications in such to whom it may be said to belong, there are sundry, who imagining they are possessed of the qualifications required, lay claim to the promise on that condition, but especially if the promise occur to the thought suddenly and unexpected, they think it must be the Spirit of Truth, that applies a word of promise so suitable to their state, and therefore take comfort and rest therein.

Now this is to be under the law and not under grace, forasmuch as the promise is here embraced and trusted in upon law terms: when we suppose ourselves to have that qualification, which the promise as conditional requires in us, and upon that condition lay claim to it, it is

manifest judaism; a seeking salvation by the works of the law, and not the christian religion which directs all our trust and confidence to Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Truth teaches us that whatever specious appearances there may be, we have nothing in reality on condition of which we can claim the favour of God in the promise; for the scripture having concluded all under sin, Gal. iii. 22. affirms that *Abraham had not whereof he might glory before God*, Rom. iv. 2. Therefore that Spirit which lulls us in a false operation cannot 'be the Spirit of Truth, but of error and falshood; as it is apparent that this way of resting upon the promise is antichristianism, and in effect, a denial that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

Again, there are promises of an absolute sound; such as, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*, Jer. xxxi. 33. *I will heal their backslidings and love them freely*, Hos. xiv. 4. and sundry others of like import. Now when those promises occur with energy to the remembrance, there is a resting on them as unconditional, in expectation of what is promised being fulfilled as an act of God's sovereign pleasure; nor is this the operation of the Spirit of Truth, for this would be to make *the promises of God against the law, which God forbid*, Gal. iii. 21. Forasmuch as the law would be against the absolute promise of salvation, as not respecting the demands of justice and holiness.

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The manner of the Spirit of Truth's operating by the word, is to refresh and comfort from the views of Jesus thereby. Whatsoever we cannot read Christ in, is scarce worth our perusal; nor is that sweet that hath not the favour of his name. *All the promises of God are in Christ Jesus yea and amen, to the glory of God* by all his witnesses, 2 Cor. i. 20. And when ever the Spirit of Truth brings any part of scripture to our remembrance, he brings Jesus in it, without whom all is dead and killing letter: if the promise he brings is conditional, he comforts us from the views of the condition being fulfilled in Jesus, and the promised grace freely ours by union with him; or if the promise hath an absolute and unconditional sound, he shews us by what means it is so; even by the obedience to death of the blessed Jesus, in whom God is our God, and we his people, and that consistent with his strictest justice and purity. Thus the Spirit of Truth, in all his operations by the scriptures, glorifies Christ, opening the wells of salvation in him, whence we draw water with joy, Isa. xii. 3.

The law is not against the promises of God in Christ, though they give the waters of life freely, because of satisfaction rendered by his life and death, and *everlasting righteousness* brought in, Dan. ix. 24.

Sometimes the Spirit of Truth may be said to operate without the scriptures, though always agreeable to them; as where, thro' the

internal discoveries of Jesus and of our redemption in his blood, he frees the mind from guilt and fear, proceeding to quicken, comfort and strengthen the heart in him; and this he often doth without the concurrence of any portion of the written word in the remembrance thereof, nor need any one fear being deceived in those views of Christ, and comfort in him, which may not have any particular text of scripture attending it upon their mind: the main question is, whether it is agreeable to the word or not? Is it from a view of what Christ is, of your relation to him, and redemption in his blood, that your consolations abound? then it is according to the law and to the testimony, be assured it is the operation of the Spirit of Truth, nor is there any deceit therein, tho' you may not have what is called, the application of a text of scripture therewith. There can be no error, according to the word of the Lord, where man is abased and Christ alone exalted—*the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day*, Isa. ii. 17. in that day Abraham became *dust and ashes*, Gen. xviii. 27. the Psalmist *as a beast before God*, Psal. lxxiii. 22. Job abhors himself *in dust and ashes*, Job xlii. 6. Jeremiah's *Heart is desperately wicked, and deceitful above all things*, Jer. xvii. 9. Isaiah is *undone, a man of unclean lips*, Isa. vi. 5. Daniel's *comeliness was turned into corruption*, Dan. x. 8. Paul was the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15,

i. 15. and John *fell as dead at his feet*, Rev. i. 17. O how glorious the day when man is abased, his haughtiness brought low, and the Lord alone exalted ! But concerning Jesus, he glorifies him, he exalts him above all heavens ; declares him to be *the desire of nations*, Hag. ii. 7. *the strength of Israel*, 1 Sam. xv. 29. *the salvation of God unto the ends of the earth*, Acts xiii. 47. upon whom is hung *all the glory of his Father's house*, Isa. xxii. 24. whose *throne endureth for ever and ever, the scepter of whose kingdom is eternal righteousness*, Heb. i. 8. whose name is above every name, to which all things in heaven and earth bow, *and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.

Again, the operations of the Spirit of Truth are to be distinguished from the passions, for want of which distinction, many things have been fathered upon the Holy Ghost, which were manifestly the fruits of man's own corrupt passions. Where the passions are mistook for the Spirit's operations, people will not fail to assert, that they are led by the Spirit in this and the other thing, though it be manifest they be influenced in what they do, by pride, anger, envy, hatred, malice, &c. and because their zeal, in the execution thereof, is such ; as to animate and invigorate them to that degree, that they can sustain any loss, suffer any reproach or extremity, even to death, for the cause they are engaged in, they think certainly they are
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led by the Spirit of Truth, else they could not have such fortitude and comfort in suffering, and doing what they have done. But alas! what is it that a person thus infatuated will not do, what is it they will not suffer to gratify the flesh, either in pride, aiming at self-righteousness, applause, or praise of men, or to be revenged on such who may be the object of their anger, envy or hatred? The truth of this doubtless occasioned that memorable and ever blessed sentence of the Holy Ghost: *Though I speak with tongues, have the gift of prophesy, have all knowledge, have all faith, though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing,* 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3. The passions, whilst kept in subordination to the Spirit of Truth, are pleasant in religion, and renders the exercise thereof delightful. But when mistaken for the Spirit, and followed, they lead into so many enthusiastic extravagancies, that whoso looks coolly on, and tries the spirit, will easily perceive the deception; and indeed to judge of the operations of the Spirit by the passions, is to be always at a loss. To raise the passions is an art, in a great measure depending upon gesture, sound of voice, pronunciation, &c. but the operation of the Spirit is not dependent upon any human power or excellency, nay but chooses rather to work without it. *Choosing the foolish to confound the wise, and the weak to confound the mighty, and the base, the despised, and things*

things which are not, hath God chosen to bring to nothing things that are, 1 Cor. i. 27, 28. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, and my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 1 Cor. ii. 1, 4. It was the saying of a certain orator, touching the effect his orations had upon the people, in raising the passions; that it did not so much matter *what* he said, as *how* he said it; however excusable this might be in Heathen policy, it is utterly unworthy a christian minister's imitation; yea to be had in abomination of all who would win souls to Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Truth operates according to judgment, and always comforts the heart from suitable discoveries of Jesus. A judicious christian will check, with disdain, his swelling passions, however pleasing, unless some cheering view or consideration of Jesus, his beloved Bridegroom, be at the bottom; as the rise and spring of all; and then he will be cautious, however pleasing they are, of following them too far, lest he forget or lose sight of his Beloved.

When we hear, read, or meditate of Jesus, of his despised life, his bitter suffering, his bloody and shameful death, we may be effected thereby, as the daughters of Jerusalem were when they saw him go forth, bearing his cross, and yet our sorrow and tears flow all from passion: where there is no faithful view of a suffering

fering Jesus, there is no operation of the Spirit of Truth. Such who know him thus, only after the flesh, mourn in the tumult of their passions, to think on the sufferings of such an innocent and good man; they hate the instruments of cruelty, are extremely angry at the Jews, the Roman soldiers, and all who were concerned in his death. In like sort the history of his resurrection fills them with joy and gladness: now where this is, without apprehending the end and design of his suffering, dying, and rising again, of their interest therein, and benefit thereby, it can be but the false flame and working of the passions, and not the operations of the Spirit of Truth; forasmuch as Jesus is not glorified, either in his personal dignity, or in his end and design in suffering and dying, which was to save his body the church, and to put a new song in her mouth, even of *mercy and judgment*, Psal. ci. 1.

The operations of the Spirit of Truth produceth the proper effects; whilst, as the light enlightening the mind, he shews us the wretchedness of our nature, and as life from the dead, quickens us to feel it; self-loathing, abasement, and an utter abhorrence of ourselves, naturally becomes the principle and temper of our souls. But from the revelation of the Son of God in the heart, we are inspired with joy and gladness. He glorifies him as *made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, Cor. i. 30. and opening our understanding

standing to discern this ; he persuades, encourages, and strengthens our hearts to the belief of the truth, and fills *us with joy and peace in believing*, Rom. xv. 13. and, as he enlightens and confirms us more fully in the faith, Jesus appears more valuable, more glorious and precious ; and thus growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. iii. 18. the righteousness of God being revealed to us, from faith to faith, Rom. i. 17. we are led on by the same spirit *in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, Eph. iv. 13. until we have so fully ceased from ourselves, as to have no more expectation of what is good and acceptable from any work of our own hands, than we would have of grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles ; but all our present joy and happiness, and expectation of future glory, is in Jesus the Lord that loved us, and bought us with his own blood. Thus all the operations of the Spirit of Truth conspire to abase the creature, to stain *his* glory, but to exalt the love and grace of the Creator, yea to set on high the Man of God's right hand, the Son of Man whom he hath made strong for himself.

Having in simplicity, and I trust agreeable to the scriptures, considered the matter according to my proposals ; I would now attempt the natural and proper use of what I have already said on this subject.

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If it be allowed that the scriptures are the rule for the trial of spirits, let us then faithfully make use of them to that purpose, and always beware of preferring the traditions of men to them: let not the wisdom, learning, holiness, or popularity of any man deceive us, so as to receive implicitly what they affirm; nay, if they were *apostles* let us try their spirit by the scriptures, whether they be of God or not. It is too common, where men are counted wise in their generation, learned, holy, and withal popular, to be blindly followed, and all that they say, however inconsistent and unscriptural, esteemed of as the oracles of God: thus, on the credit of their character, their doctrine and traditions are received. For a man to call in question the truth of what they affirm, after the trial of their spirit, would be deemed an unpardonable crime: such is the course of this world: nor may we expect they will undeceive the world in this particular, as that would be to deny themselves, which goes hard with men of their substance. *Mystery Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*, and the root of apostasy from Christ. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; bring them to the scriptures, let that indeed be the rule of your faith and practice, and, if it should be thought a deviation from the beaten track of man's traditions, be not terrified, neither be afraid of being singular for Christ, when you have

have the signature of the Spirit of Truth for what you do : this will preserve you from being tossed about with every wind of doctrine ; nor will you then cry, Lo ! here is Christ, or lo ! there is Christ ; but you will strictly abide by that rule, whereby you may know the Spirit which is of God.

Is it true, that the nature of the Spirit of Truth is known by his fruit ? and is *the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance* ? Gal. v. 23. All who profess to believe the scriptures, acknowledge these as the fruits of the Spirit, though the greatest part are yet at a loss where to find them as really produced and brought forth. They read the fruit of the Spirit is love, but when they look to such who profess to *have* the Spirit ; they perceive bitterness, envy, strife, uncharitableness, and all the reverse of love ; or where there is an appearance of love, is it not contracted to the narrow limit of a party ? is it not to such who wear our own complexion ? or, if now and then it make an extraordinary advance towards such, who are not within those pales, is it not because they are popular ? is it not because their persons are had in admiration ? But when doth it extend to our enemy, and that in heart, and not in tongue only ? when doth it satisfy his hungry soul with bread, and relieve his thirst with water ? whose soul is that, which will always bless where it is cursed ? and who is he, that will always do good
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where evil is done unto him? shew me the man or the woman upon earth, and I will shew you one who brings forth the fruits of the Spirit of Truth: and yet this is the plain and positive doctrine of the Lord Jesus; *but I say unto you, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you,* Luke vi. 27, 28. every proud boaster would do well to consider this, and ask his conscience calmly, in the presence of him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, am I the man? certain it is, the envious, the malicious, the uncharitable, the bigot, cannot be the person. And with what face, any man can boast of his bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, or with what conscience he can please and sooth himself in the thought thereof, whilst he answers not in character to this doctrine, which our Saviour hath so plainly distinguished his religion by, in its influence and powerful effects, from all religions upon earth, I cannot understand: but sure I am it is unscriptural, and I think, utterly inconsistent; and indeed instead of loving our enemies, &c. is it not with us yet, rather, *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth?* yea, is not this our wretched case, the more we boast of the Spirit, and profess to bear his fruit, the farther we are from it and the more contrary to his nature? is it not from the profession of bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, which is love, &c. that men take an occasion to hate their brethren their
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fellow-creatures? whence is that language of the heart, *stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou?* Isa. lxxv. 5. Whence is it we think ourselves authorized to run counter to our profession (which is the love of God and man) in back-biting, evil-speaking, slandering, lying, uncharitably censuring, bearing false witness against our neighbour, but from a selfish and mistaken conceit of our being something, when we are nothing? All manner of persecution is inconsistent with christianity, yea expressly forbidden, where we are taught to love our enemies, and to *esteem of others better than ourselves*, Phil. ii. 3. But alas! how few are there (if any) who fully follow these blessed maxims; but on the contrary, are full of strife and hatred, living in open violence, or secret whisperings; and though, under the truly valuable government of these kingdoms, they are indeed restrained from an immediate dipping their hands in each other's blood; yet will they, thro' hatred and evil speech, murder without mercy, all such whose supposed errors in principle, or practice, have rendered them the objects of their hatred and contempt, and all under a profession of bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit, which is love.

I am persuaded these things are too obvious and well known to require particulars in proof thereof, forasmuch as they are not confined to corners, but stalk in open day: and is this the method of doing *good unto all men?* Gal. vi. 10.

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is this the method of *esteeming others better than ourselves*? Phil. ii. 3. is this the acknowledgment we make of our having *nothing but what we have received*? 1 Cor. iv. 7. are those the fruits of the Spirit of Truth? God forbid; every reasonable man must conclude, that if a spirit is known by his fruits, that spirit, from whom such fruits as these proceed, must be diabolical; else where is the love of the Spirit, which is free, impartial, unchangeable? where the *joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*? &c. True, there are appearances of this amongst christians, and so there is in uncultivated nature, where nothing sways but reason and the natural disposition of the mind: will it be urged that it is in a greater measure among christians? it is granted it ought to be so from their profession: but whether it is so is a matter of dispute I think. Whether love and friendship amongst the Heathen, are not with more truth and constancy, than they are in the generality amongst those called christians? yea, the former would scorn such mean and pitiful behaviour, as such who are counted most eminent amongst the latter, make no conscience of. The spirit of the one is open, generous and free; they fail not to appear in their own colour; whilst the other, under a cloak of religion, a pretended zeal for holiness, the glory of God, and the good of souls, give the most pregnant proofs of their pride, hatred, malice, revenge and covetousness;

ness ; as though the wrath of man, with the spirit of Satan, was to work the righteousness of God, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit of Truth. *But be not deceived, God is not mocked ; for what a man soweth, that shall he reap,* Gal. vi. 7. O my brethren, how long shall we call light darkness, and darkness light.

As you profess to bear the fruits of the Spirit, only produce them, Jesus shall have the praise, and you the comfort. If the fruit of the Spirit is love, what is the object thereof ? If it is self, I confess there is a plentiful produce of self-love in the world : but if it is God and your neighbour, bring it forth and it is well ; loving the Lord your God with all your heart, love your neighbour as yourselves, yea better than yourselves ; for this is the love of the Spirit ; and then all hatred, evil speaking, whispering, and treachery will cease of course. Is the fruit of the Spirit joy ? shew it by your rejoicing in the Lord alway, in every state and condition, and let the whole of your conduct, towards your fellow-creatures, be such as will increase their joy, and not their distress. Is the fruit of the Spirit peace ? have not only peace yourselves, but seek it and ensue it ; be always a maker and promoter, but never a breaker of peace : join not yourselves with the sons of bluster and violence, who jump upon the threshold and fill the house with strife. Is the fruit of the Spirit long-suffering ? forbearing revenge, suffer all wrongs and injuries done you with patience,

and rest in the will of God. Is the fruit of the Spirit gentleness? laying aside all haughtiness and austerity, be easily entreated and approached without fear. Is the fruit of the Spirit goodness? O how extensive is this! let your heart be heavenly, compassionate, affectionate, kind, tender, without guile, and all your actions be benevolent, just and refreshing towards man, self-denying and sincere towards God. Is the fruit of the Spirit faith? stagger not through unbelief, but be strong in the faith, giving glory to God; always believe him, always trust him, in every state, in every condition, be satisfied, be content; never murmuring nor repining. Is it meekness and temperance? let your spirit and practice show it forth, that you may have both name and thing. It is not sufficient to say we have the appearance of those things, or that we have them in reality, whilst inconstant, imperfect.

All the fruits of the Spirit of Truth are perfect, else they would not be proof and evidence of his nature. If all the works and fruits of the Spirit of Truth are declarative of his nature, they must be perfectly holy. And if those works and fruits are wrought and produced in man, do they not, must they not answer this character? I confess, the common solution of this, perfection in part, but not in degree, is not intelligible to me; and I rather think it is too intricate and scholastic, for the plain and simple doctrine of christianity,
which,

which, in divine wisdom, is ordained for the edification, not only of the learned, but the unlearned, yea *the way-faring men, tho' fools shall not err therein*, Isa. xxxv. 8. Beside, it appears to me utterly inconsistent with the main end and design of the christian religion, which is the glory of God, and the good of mankind: because, if it may be supposed that the fruits of the Spirit are in a man, who yet can be proud, malicious, angry, envious, hateful, uncharitable, &c. wherein is God glorified, or his fellow-creatures benefited by his fruit? but, should it be urged, although the fruit of the Spirit in man do not perfectly free him from sin, yet it keeps under the lusts, passions, and corruptions of his heart, so that they do not break out at any time to the dishonour of God, or the prejudice of his fellow-creature: should this be allowed, though I cannot see how it may, (nor have I known amongst all my acquaintance one single instance of it) it is still granted, that though they are delivered from the outward acts of sin, yet the seed and evil thereof remains. Who are they, that believing the scripture, will deny that our Saviour expounds the inclination as an act of the heart before God? Matt. v. 28. Therefore, what a false soothing of the soul must it be, when a person, under the power of his passions and corruptions, reckons of himself to have the fruits of the Spirit, and consequently to be in a state of safety, because, at times he feels a contrary

disposition of mind, looks upon himself as having two principles in him, good and bad; reckoning of his condition towards God by the good principle, though his spirit and conduct are manifestly under the power of the bad; and here values himself on the account of inward holiness, and takes occasion to be very bitter against such whom he thinks deficient therein, though he himself brings few other fruits to light than what I have already mentioned.

I am persuaded there are but few, if any, so abandoned amongst the human race, but what their conscience, at times, accuses or excuses them; there is a principle in them which cannot but approve of true virtue and piety, and acknowledge the evil of vice: Why might not a person of this character conclude he hath the fruits of the Spirit, and therefore that all mankind have them? Because if this proposition, perfection in parts, but not in degree, be true, then the least measure thereof is perfect, and denominates the person sanctified, yea, one who hath the fruits of the Spirit. And, if it can be proved that all mankind have at times, good and pious motions, yea, habitually a witness for God in them, accusing or excusing them, as Rom. ii. 15. then, notwithstanding their measure is small they are all sanctified, all filled with the fruits of the Spirit, which may not be granted. If it should be urged, that the pious motions and dispositions which are in christians, are different in nature from those
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which are in mankind in the general, and that this difference is commonly defined as working *for* life and *from* life : that a christian, knowing the grace of God, works *from* life ; that is, rejoices, obeys, and performs all the exercises of religion as naturally as the sun rises, as we breathe, and the like ; which is not the case with the unregenerate, who are driven by the threats of punishment, or drawn by promises of reward in all they do ; if this is the case, why is it suggested that christians cannot have comfort, nay cannot have life, except they work and obey ? and if it is thus natural for them to obey, why then all the exhortations and motives made use of to excite them to it ? what need of all this spurring, where is it so natural for them to run ? besides, who is there, knowing his own heart, that is not apprized of this ? He cannot *do*, *feel*, or *suffer* any thing for God, but what he must be sensible that his mind cleaves to it ; and, more or less, takes comfort thence, and hath dependence thereon ; nor can he, I believe ; whilst in the body, be wholly free from a legal temper.

Should it be granted, that mankind in the general, not understanding those terms of distinction, working *from* life and *for* life, nor being conversant with the scriptures, have *greater* expectations from the work of their own hands ; and may be said more abundantly to work *for* life : but are there not times when they are, in measure, sensible of the in-

sufficiency of of their own works to save them, and therefore appeal from themselves to the goodness and mercy of God? If it is supposed that there is the least spark of good, the doctrine of perfection in *parts*, but not in *degree*, cannot deny their being sanctified, nor their having the fruits of the Spirit, however small their measure. Probably it may be urged, that real christians are changed, are reformed from all vice, whereas the generality of mankind remain in their sins. This indeed would be a powerful argument, if the change, or reformation, was so effectual as to make men new creatures in themselves: True it is, there are many who are reformed from drunkenness, uncleanness, thefts, swearing, gaming and all outward crimes: but what are they reformed unto? is it not unto spiritual pride, with prayer? to anger, hatred, malice, with the use of sacraments? to all uncharitableness, with the reading of the scriptures? to back-biting, evil-speaking, lying and slander, with a precise and pretended holy life? Now we will suppose a man living in drunkenness, whoredoms, thefts, gamings, &c. and another to be reformed from all this wickedness; and to pray often, to hear sermons, to frequent the Lord's table, to give alms, to fast, to keep the sabbath, to have been deeply afflicted for his sins, to have received comfort from his amendment of life, and trust in the grace of God through Christ, to have comfortable views from the
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work of sanctification carried on in him, &c. and yet this person be spiritually proud, that is, good in his own eyes, better than what he has been, better than his neighbours; a whisperer, back-biter, evil-speaker, revengeful, yea, a murderer, (if to hate one's brother be murder, as the Holy Ghost says it is, John iii. 15.) now what says the scriptures of these two persons? what think you of them? the scriptures call the former, a dog, a swine, 2 Pet. ii. 22. and calls the latter, a serpent, a viper, Matt. xxiii. 33. When a man is apprized of his danger, he is more easily provided against the hurt he may receive from a dog, or swine; for they, though enemies, are more public and generous; but a serpent lies concealed in your paths, and biting your heel, gives you an unexpected wound: though the rending of a dog, or a swine, may often be very hurtful, yet the sting, or bite of a viper, is much more dangerous, and, by reason of its emitted poison, often proves mortal. When a person, utterly unacquainted with the nature of those animals, beholds a foaming dog, or a swine bedaubed with mire, he will avoid them as dangerous and nauseous; but seeing a serpent of a beautiful colour basking in the sun, judging by the outward appearance, he concludes it harmless, as beautiful; and becoming familiar with it, gives it an opportunity of biting him; whilst the poor afflicted wretch, to excuse his credulity, cries out, Who could have thought it!

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who would have expected it from a creature of so beautiful an appearance! A dog, a swine, however fierce and cruel, are not so much to be dreaded, because they are impolitically rash, and run upon us with noise and clamour; but a viper, a serpent, is the most subtle of all the beasts of the field; we are hardly secure from their attacks; when we think least of it, and are walking in the greatest security, we are stung without warning. And, as I would avoid the fellowship and acquaintance of both, so would I much more that of the viper and serpent, as more dreadfully dangerous. And yet, persons who answer this character, are generally the greatest boasters of the Spirit's fruits, and most contentious for inward holiness and purity; but, have not this self-righteousness and holiness, been, in every age, the bane of Zion's peace and love? what bred the contentions in the church between the Arians and orthodox, in the first ages of christianity, on which account there was so much blood shed, and each party, as they had power, revenged themselves on the other? was it not, that the one thought themselves more orthodox, and consequently more righteous, more holy than the others? What was it occasioned the Popish persecutions, when such dreadful fires were kindled, in which, many of the noble army of martyrs rendered up their souls to God their Saviour, but the same cursed principle? What occasioned the persecution of the Protestant dissenters by the hierar-

hierarchy, but the same principle? And when so many of *them* had fled to a strange land, on account of religion; what moved them, when they had power, to persecute, even to death, others of their fellow-creatures on religious accounts, but the same cursed principle? What makes one set of christians hate another, and persecute them with vile names, reproach and anathema's, when they have no farther power to punish, but the same principle still? What makes one christian persecute another with the sword of the tongue, wound his name, his character, yea, murder him according to the scriptures, and all probably without knowing the person they smite, or the truth of what they smite him for? is it not self-righteousness, self-holiness, that accursed, hellish thought? O! it is the fountain of enmity against God, and of all contentions, strife, hatred and confusion amongst men. From hence that unruly evil, the tongue, takes occasion to destroy where the hands are tied. And to explain this more fully, hear what James saith, when he spake of it as in the tongue: *The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison; therewith bless we God, even the Father; and curse we men, who*
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are made in the similitude of God, Jam. iii. 6, 7, 8, 9. When self-righteousness sets this unruly evil a going, there is no end to its slanders, bitter invectives and murders; therefore prays the Psalmist, *Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues*, Pſal. xxxi. 20. Can that, which is the cause of so much mischief, so much evil, be the fruits of the Spirit? God forbid; can that, which hath a tendency to puff up man, to make him wise, orthodox and holy in his own eyes, and from thence to bring forth the cursed fruits before-mentioned, be the fruits of the Spirit? God forbid: is it possible that man can be wise and holy in himself, in his own eyes, without being puffed up, and consequently bring forth such fruits? I think it impossible: and from thence conclude, that we cannot find the fruits of the Spirit, in truth and perfection, in man. But then some one will say, if they are not to be found in man, according to his spirit and behaviour in life, why have you mentioned them, as what we are to know the nature of the Spirit of Truth by? To this I answer, though we have sought for them amongst the many thousands of Israel here below, and cannot find them in their perfection and glory, yet is it in reality a glorious truth: that all these blessed fruits of the Spirit are brought forth and produced in man. And if you would know this wonder of a Man, this Person, so worthy of admiration, in whom all these fruits abound, and in perfect beauty shine,

shine, give me leave to say tis J E S U S ! who only is holy, who only is the L O R D. Come, see, wonder at, and admire the fruits of the Spirit in Him ! In Him is love, without partiality, without bitterness, without wavering, without dissimulation : how infinite, how unspeakable his love to God, even the Father ! he loved him with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength ; he loved so, that it was his meat and his drink to do his will. How great his love to the sons of men ! and without partiality, as extending to Jew and Gentile, to bond and free ; to the most wretched of mankind, yea, whether they are fifty, or five hundred-pence sinners, with infinite frankness, his love extends without distinction to them all. Without bitterness, as admitting of no ingredient of wrath, no spark of anger, fury was not in him, but love was all his intention, desire, heart and nature towards man ; without wavering, as steadfast, unshaken, having loved his own he loved them to the end : no consideration whatever, not that of the unknown sorrows and dreadful sufferings, which so sorely amazed his soul, could shake his love or cause a momentary wavering ; not that of the enmity of man, yea, the base ingratitude of his own household, the thought of which, though it wrung sweat in bloody drops like rain from him, caused not the least shadow of turning in his love to man. Love ! undissembled love led him through his unfathomed humiliation,
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where his judgment was taken away, where dwelt the darkness of the shadow of death : and tho' death and hell put on their most dreadful forms, and, armed with all their terrors, sought to oppose his passage through to light and immortality, as the representative of man ; yet singly armed with love, he would not, could not flee, but greatly swallowed up death, and the grave in victory, and destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil. O how fervent, how sincere his love, passing knowledge, stronger than death, enriching the children of men with grace, glory, and immortality ! This indeed is love, the Spirit's fruit of love ; such, that for the salvation of man, sinful man, endured the cross and despised the shame. The force of that ancient maxim, love your friend, and hate your enemy, was here repelled ; and love, love without dissimulation, and that to the most inveterate enemies, proved to the greatest demonstration : feeding their hungry souls with bread, the bread of life ; and quenching their thirst with the waters of life : Yea, not withholding his own flesh and blood, but freely giving it for the life of the world, making it meat indeed, and drink indeed, to his church. He blessed where he was cursed, and prayed for such who used him spitefully. Behold every fruit in its greatest perfection and ripeness abounding in him ! The joy of the Lord was his strength ; he rejoiced not in iniquity, but in the truth ; in the glory of God
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and the salvation of man. He was the Prince of peace, the God of peace, the Son of peace, the peace between heaven and earth, between God and man, between Jew and Gentile, between every believer's conscience and God the judge of all men. His birth proclaimed God's intention of peace to the earth, his every action and suffering in life promoted it, his bloody death and passion hath for ever ratified it, and the gospel of his blood is the tidings of this everlasting peace to mankind. He hath the fruit of long-suffering, who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself; when reviled he reviled not again, but bare it with patience and long-suffering: How amazingly hath he shewn it in all the distress and torments of his life and death! How infinite his forbearance and patience towards mankind, notwithstanding the manifold provocations wherewith they have provoked the eyes of his glory! He truly hath the gentleness of the dove, humane, kind, easy of access, and as easy to be entreated; no austerity, sternness, shyness, fury, or passion to be seen in him; but all is gentle, mild, sweet, calm, surpassing the utmost desire and conception of our mind. His goodness exceeds all description. Is it good to be compassionate? he hath compassion on the ignorant, and on such who are out of the way. And as a father pities his own children, so he pities them that fear him. Is it good to be benevolent? as his stores are immense, so is his benevolence boundless. He hath healed
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all our maladies, and supplied all our wants, according to the riches of his grace. In brief, his goodness towards God and man is perfect. To do good, and to communicate is his nature and property.

Faithfulness is the girdle of his reins : faithful in things pertaining to God, and faithful to man : faithful in his word, in his offices, in his relations : faithful to every sacred name he bears, and character which he assumes : faithful in his love, friendship, sympathy and kindness. O he is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother, nor is there any unfaithfulness in him !

Meekness in perfection dwells in him : Moses was meek, but not perfectly so ; witness his wrath when he brake the tables of the law ; his fury and unadvised speech at the waters of strife ; and though he was more meek than any man upon earth, yet it was but a figure and shadow of the meekness of Jesus ; for in him it is without mixture or contrariety : his meek and lowly heart is always the same ; nor can he ever be provoked to fury and anger, or ever drop an unadvised word.

Temperate in all things, as one who strove for the mastery over Satan, sin, and death ; and therefore, when accused of gluttony, wine-bibbing, sedition, &c. it was no farther true, than as, when made sin for us, *he* bare those offences of the people in his own body upon the cross ; and the character of sinners falling upon

upon him, He was numbered amongst the transgressors. For in himself he was temperate; not so in profession, or appearance only, that he might gain the praise of men: for he sought not his reputation thereby, nor was his honour or kingdom of this world. His use of abstinence, and fasting, was not that under the holy guise he might have an opportunity of devouring the widow's house, and amassing the present world: But his temperance was sincere, without guile, yea, universal, in meats, drinks, apparel, sleep, and bodily rest, in his use of the world, its riches, honour, pleasures, cares, the passions of the mind, or whatever the soul of man may be temperate in; and thus all the fruits of the Spirit of Truth abound in him.

Who is he that would learn the nature of the Spirit of Truth from his fruits? let him come and learn it here, in the perfect man, who, thus adorned, is fairer than the sons of men, from whose lips drop grace and truth. When we look to man, to ourselves, for these fruits; we find so many contrarieties and imperfections, as to imbitter our reflections, and makes us cry, O my leanness! so that we cannot learn the nature of the Spirit of Truth there, as already observed. And if we would distinguish between *man* and *himself*, according to different principles in him, so as not to judge of his *good* by his *bad*, but consider his good in the abstract, bringing it for tri-

al to the standard of all good, the divine nature, there is neither proportion nor comparison; so that man may not, considered after what he is in himself, be justly the object of his own or another's admiration: nay, the Father hath reserved this honour and glory for the beloved Son, who is the head of his body the church, *that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*

We are called upon to consider him as the Apostle and High-priest of our profession: to rejoice in him, to admire him, to love him, to boast of him, to gaze upon him as *the beauty of holiness*, yea, *the perfection of beauty*, the *chief amongst ten thousand*, the *altogether lovely*; to esteem of him as precious above all.—*Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth, that I desire besides Thee.* This is the christian's chief delight, his highest pleasure.

Whatever the holy scriptures define as the Spirit's fruit, that Jesus is in himself; insomuch that he is the true and glorious fruit of the Spirit of Truth; he is love, he is joy, he is peace, he is long-suffering, he is gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against whom there is no law. Let us admire him, adore him, and rejoice in his light.

Furthermore, having a little considered the state and condition of mankind, how poor, how vain a creature man is, notwithstanding his boasting of his fruits, his holiness, &c. and
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how that Jesus only is perfect, only is holy, the just admiration of all his people.

I would farther consider wherein his children are benefited by what he is in himself; *I am like a green firr-tree*, says he, *from me is thy fruit found*, Hof. xiv. 8. Again, *I am the vine, ye are the branches*, John xv. 5. Our Saviour, by comparing himself to a *firr-tree*, points out his everlasting verdure and fruitfulness; and, by telling the church that *her* fruit is found from *him*, he sheweth that *his* fruit is *hers*, that *she* hath a just claim to it, and that *she* cannot cease to be fruitful whilst *he* is fruitful. *I am the vine, ye are the branches*; whereby he sheweth, that as the vine and branches make one tree; so he, and his children, make one body: and as the branches were naturally in the vine before a sprout appeared; so were his children in him as beloved and chosen from everlasting: and as, in the fulness of time, the vine puts forth its branches, in order to bear fruit; so did *he* bring forth his children into existence, that *he* might bring forth fruit unto God: and as the vine, consisting of stock and branches, is dressed by the husbandman, in order to its fruitfulness; so was Jesus, consisting of head and members in one body, bruised, afflicted, and dealt with by the Father, the great Husbandman, for the destruction of sin, and the bringing forth of good fruit: and as the vine brings forth all its fruit upon the branches; (having no distinct fruit from the branches, nor

any other way of bearing it,) so Jesus hath brought forth all the fruit of his obedience and sufferings, with every gracious quality that was manifest in him, upon his people; nor, according to the consideration of this union between him and them, has he any distinct fruit from them, or any other way of bearing fruit but upon them. Thus he bears *their* fruit, and, as he says, from *me* is *THY* fruit found. In this mystery of our fruitfulness in Christ, he alone is glorified and hath the pre-eminence; for here the branch doth not arrogantly assume the character of being fruitful in itself, considered as distinct from the tree; and independent thereof, else the husbandman, casting his eye upon it, separate from the tree, might say, O thou blessed and fruitful *branch*! to the dishonour of the *tree*; but considered in the tree, and as fruitful only in that, the husbandman beholding it as having all the branches laden with fruit, says, O thou blessed and fruitful *tree*, my pleasure prospers in *thee*!

Thus hath Jesus the pre-eminence, glory and praise, where all our fruitfulness is in him: of this we attempt to rob him, when we, commencing proud boasters, talk and contend for *our* bearing fruit and doing wonders, forgetting him on whom our help is laid, and from whom all our fruit is found. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, neither can ye except ye abide in me*, John xv. 4. hence it appears, that the christian only is fruitful as
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he abides in Christ. He is in him as a *member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, Eph. v. 30. And according to this mystery he hath produced all the fruits of his life, death, and resurrection upon us; and when Christ is revealed in us *the hope of glory*, Col. i. 27. the conscience cleaves, yea, is united and married unto him; insomuch, that all that he is, and all that he hath done, becomes ours, according to the assurance of the understanding and testimony of the mind. We, thus receiving him, have power given us to become the sons of God, John i. 12. and, according to the conscience, we do the works which he did, as he promised, John xiv. 12. All his fruitfulness being upon us, we bear it, and bring it forth in Spirit unto God, being *married unto him who is risen from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God*, Rom. vii. 4.

But as in physiognomy, when we would guess the nature and condition of a person, we look into the face, for what concerns the whole person; so, as Jesus is the Head of his body the church, he is also her face; and whoever would guess of her nature and condition in general, or that of any one member in particular, let them look into her face, and learn it there; there alone is the beauty and perfection of the king's daughter seen, cloathed with her garment of wrought needle-work. In this view every christian appears as led by the Spirit of Truth, as bearing all the precious fruits thereof,

as having clean escaped the garment spotted by the flesh, no more fulfilling the lusts thereof; having this testimony, that they please God, yea, that they always do the things that please him, because of Jesus their Head and Fore-runner.

If it is true, that the office of the Spirit of Truth, according to the scriptures, is to glorify Christ; then may we know whether the spirits which speak, or profess to preach the gospel, are of God, or not.

I have already shewn, according to the word of God, that where a Spirit is found speaking of himself, it cannot be the Spirit of Truth, and therefore not of God.

And if it is true, that by a spirit's speaking of himself, we may understand it's pointing out, and testifying of the impulse, operation, or influence of the mind as productive of joy, sorrow, love, desire, though centering in heavenly things; thence persuading mankind of their being possessed of the Spirit of Truth; there, nor only permitting, but encouraging them to found their hope: I say, if this is to speak of himself, and consequently to be a false spirit; let us not believe nor follow that spirit, but with all boldness, and the assurance of understanding, reject it as not of God. And in so doing, let us not be *afraid of man, who shall die, nor of the son of man, who is but as grass.* Neither let their high titles, learning, or wisdom be of any weight with us, when we are
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led, in pursuit of the Truth, into singular paths. We would disclaim all foolish, affected singularity, where the conscience is not concerned, as that which is vain and ridiculous. But when a man, simply aiming at the glory of Christ, without partiality, searches the scriptures, what his conscience clearly, and without doubtfulness, from thence suggests unto him, is the Truth, which he is to abide by, though all the world should testify the contrary. And, however such an one might be charged with error and obstinacy, yet will he abide by the testimony of his conscience, nor may he depart thence on any account whatever, unless he will pierce himself through with many sorrows. If this is not true, then our determination, in cases of conscience, and matters of faith, must not be in our own bosoms, as evident in the scriptures. But the church hath the keeping and power of this, say they, who would have the clergy only to be the church; and others would persuade us, that the expositions on the scriptures, and dead bodies of divinity, wrote by learned and holy men, and approved of by the multitude, have the power and keeping of it. If this is not true, then the martyrs of old shed their blood and laid down their lives for trifles, yea, for nothing, when they died for the testimony of a good conscience. But we have not so learned Christ, nor are we thus taught by the scriptures, to

which we do well to give heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place.

If that spirit, which speaks of reformation and change wrought upon man, thence, persuading you of your safety, and glorifying himself in you as the author of this change; if this spirit may be deemed to speak of himself, and therefore antichristian; let us not blindly follow the multitude, whatever profession of piety and virtue, whatever plea of consolation the good man (so called) hath, from the contemplations of his own pious actions and habits, but faithfully confess ourselves christians, whose hope and rejoicing are in Christ Jesus, and not in ourselves; being well assured, that the Spirit of Truth will not speak of himself, will not lead us for salvation, nor consolation, to any change, or virtuous habit, which he, by revealing Jesus, hath wrought in us, but will always glorify Christ, as him alone in whom we are saved, without works of righteousness as wrought by us; as him, who in the fulness of his grace and glory, is the only comfort and joy of our heart.

If that spirit, who insinuates that he is injured by the preaching of Christ alone, is antichrist; let us be aware thereof, and constantly reject it, as not of God. I mean by this spirit, that which stirs up, and raises objections against gospel-faith and doctrine, insinuating that it destroys the work of the Spirit, by not making it a chief subject; but, that, by ascribing the whole

whole of our salvation to Christ, we exclude the work of the Spirit. This objection makes such a wide distinction between Christ and the Spirit, as to make their works and interests different.

That there is an inexplicable mystery in the Deity is certain, of which, it appears to me, the highest arrogance to attempt a definition; yet, that Jesus Christ and the Spirit of Truth have separate interests, the scripture denies; teaching us, that the whole Godhead is interested in the honour and glory of Jesus: as where it says, *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father*, John v. 23. And concerning the Spirit of Truth; he says, *When he is come, he will not speak of himself, but will glorify me*. And, as all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in him, (and he is *God manifested in the flesh*) we conceive, according to the scriptures, that God, Father, Word and Spirit, is to be believed on and trusted in, approached unto and worshipped in Him. And, as such who object to the divine honours given Jesus in the church, as derogatory to the Father, may not be said to have seen his day, nor digested the scriptures concerning him; so those who object to the faith and doctrine of Christ alone, as denying the work of the Spirit, or as deficient without our adding to it the work of the Spirit, as a distinct subject; may be said, either to *err, as not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God* concerning this matter; or else, to speak, from a warm and inconsiderate zeal, what they have nothing to support, but the
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the doctrines and traditions of men. For, I think, I have proved by the scriptures, or at least given such hints that any unprejudiced and impartial enquirer may easily perceive, that the office and work of the Holy Ghost consists in glorifying Jesus, in testifying of him, shewing us what he is, what he has done, drawing us to him, persuading us of our salvation and glory in him, stirring us up to the acknowledgement and confession of his worthy praise. And the clearer this is, the more evidently the work of the Spirit of Truth appears. How dreadful the mistake then, when either thro' enmity to Christ, or zeal for the traditions of men, light is called darkness, and darkness light; and many object to the work of the Spirit of Truth itself, that it opposes the work of the Spirit, and thereby take part with a spirit of delusion and falshood against the truth itself: and this will be always the case, until we are content to see with our own eyes, hear with our own ears, and judge for ourselves, and no longer see and hear with other men's eyes and ears, nor judge by their determinations. Well might the apostle, in the words of the text, say, *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.*

O my brethren, how long will it be e'er we shall think for ourselves? when shall we be delivered from the tyranny of tradition, and no longer enslaved thereby? let not the authority of any, though called great men (and on some accounts probably, truly accounted such) sway with

with us, when what concerns our eternal life and happiness comes under our consideration; but, let us *to the law, and to the testimony*; there first let us sacrifice all our favourite sentiments, yea, every darling opinion that clashes with the sacred word; with this let us offer all in man, on the credit of which we would swallow their doctrines without examination by the word; whether it is learning, wisdom, piety, or popularity; and abiding the decision of the scriptures be content to be judged thereby, and, by its simple authority to determine of what we hear.

My aim in speaking thus, is to draw all, who profess christianity, to the scriptures, as the rule of their faith and practice. By them would I be tried in all things, particularly in what I here write. Yea, to them I appeal, and that not according to any private interpretation, but according to what every generous and candid mind may discern in them.

The holy scriptures positively declare that spirit, which denieth that Jesus is come in the flesh, to be antichrist; by which, if we may not only understand a denial of his incarnation, but, that of his having answered the end of his coming, which was to fulfil all righteousness, to atone for sin, and to save his people with an everlasting salvation, let us then learn to avoid, first, that spirit which denies the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, or his coming in the flesh, or that he, *who is God blessed for ever, amen*, according to the flesh, came of the stock of Israel.

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The apostle gives us such a plain description of antichrist in those words, that except we wilfully shut our eyes against the truth, we cannot fail discovering it; for as it is the office and work of the Spirit of Truth to glorify Christ; insomuch that *no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*; so is it the true characteristick of antichrist to deny the eternal power and Godhead of the Lamb.

Let us then reject this false spirit as an enemy to our Saviour; and with this the spirit which denieth his having answered the end of his coming. For it is at best but a compliment paid to Jesus, where his Godhead is confest, but the all-sufficiency of his blood and sacrifice denied; truly to deny the latter, is to deny the former, whatever pretension there may be to the contrary, whatever pleas those false spirits may make for the denial of his Godhead as contrary to reason, or for the denial of his all-sufficient grace and merit for our salvation and happiness, without works of righteousness as done by us, as having a tendency to destroy holiness, and make people careless of good works. I say, notwithstanding those pleas, let us upon the authority of the scripture, reject every such spirit, as not of God. Do the scriptures say that Jesus Christ was *God manifest in the flesh*? 1 Tim. iii. 16. Do they say, that *He bare our sins, in his own body, on the cross*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. and *both appeared to put sin away by the sacrifice of himself*? Heb. ix. 26. Then this is the language of the Spirit

Spirit of Truth, and plainly testifies that the other is not of God.

What if our reason cannot attain the comprehension of all that God hath revealed, must we therefore doubt, and deny it? Wherein is he honoured and glorified in the credit we pay to him in his word, if we believe him no farther than it is demonstrate to our reason and senses? it may indeed be urged, that this is credit sufficient to the testimony of man because fallible, and therefore liable to err: but is it so to him who is infallible and cannot lie? I suppose it will not be affirmed. How inconsistent and false then is the spirit which denieth that Jesus is come in the flesh! Altogether as false, and much more inconsistent, is that spirit which, professing the dignity of his person, denies the all-sufficiency of his merit, as destructive to holiness of life. Here may it be said, *vain man would be wise though born a wild asses colt*, Job xi. 12. Vain man would be good, though *there is none good but God*, Luke xviii. 19. Vain man would do wonders, though *it is not in him that walketh to direct his steps*, Jer. x. 23.

The Pharisees of old accused our Saviour of destroying the law and the prophets by his doctrine, and of ungodliness in his practice, as breaking the sabbath-day, &c. their brethren of this generation, though they will not immediately accuse him, as the former Pharisees did, yet it is plain they suspect him, yea, are very jealous of him; they are for softening his words,

words, as though they were wiser than he; and for mixing his doctrine with cautions, and proper expositions upon his phrases, lest it should hurt weak minds. And as for the faith of his gospel, who can bear it? that is reckoned so destructive to holiness of life, and in itself so dangerous on many accounts, that whosoever will confess it, must partake of the afflictions thereof; deny himself, and take up his cross, yea, lose his life, for the sake of Christ and his gospel: forasmuch as it is impossible that any man should live godly in Christ Jesus, without suffering persecution, 2 Tim. iii. 12. As for the godliness which reason plans, that is admired by all, yea even by such who are far from the practice of any, because it makes a fair shew in the flesh, makes trial of its purity by reason, and not by the perfections of God, and is therefore looked on as real godliness: whereas, if it was to be tried by the perfection of God (of which his law is a transcript) all the pride, vain-glory, self-seeking, &c. with which all that man is capable of doing abounds, would appear, and all his righteousness become filthy rags. But the reasoning plan cannot discover this, and therefore allows man to pride himself in his own works, under the notion of delight and pleasure in virtue, and that without any consideration of reward, yea, allows him a secret pleasure and thankfulness of heart, that he is not as other men, nor as this or that publican; yea farther,

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it will allow him, as that which is lawful, the praise and respect of his fellow-creatures, and that he should take pleasure therein, and esteem of it as a blessing attending the uprightness of his heart and the cleanness of his hands; yea, and that he should look on it as a particular mark of God's favour to him. Now this is the good man, for whom *some would even dare to die*, Rom. v. 7. But we will suppose this man brought over to believe the gospel, that is, to believe and confess that Jesus Christ, in the mystery of his person, by his obedience to death, hath eternally saved him, and perfected him in righteousness and true holiness to God, and that without works of righteousness done by him: from whence it appears so far from being lawful for him to pride himself in his own works, that he now rather denies them, and having done all things commanded, confesses himself an unprofitable servant, and acknowledges all that delight and pleasure which others profess to have in doing good, to be in *him* but pride, self-righteousness, and a lifting up of the heart against Christ: he can no longer thank God that he is better than other men, as he has known his heart *to be desperately wicked and deceitful above all things*, himself the chief of sinners, and hath therefore learned to *esteem of others better than himself*: he can no longer count it right, with Christ, for him to court the praise and respect of his fellow-creatures, nor ever think he has deserved it, or that it is any mark of God's favour; because

because he knows now, that the friendship of the world is death; and his master hath said, *Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets*, Luke vi. 26. We will farther suppose, that this man, notwithstanding the change which hath passed upon him, hath made no alteration with respect to his former exercise of piety, is yet as upright, as virtuous, as liberal, as truly religious, and of as tender a conscience as before, yea, we will suppose him *more* abounding in all this, yet forasmuch as the before-mentioned change has passed over him, and he with his whole heart and soul, declares all his righteousness to be filthy rags, and as a menstruous cloth, whilst in the Lord alone he hath righteousness and strength: He shall now be suspected, accused, condemned, laden with calumny and reproach: there are none who will die for him *now*; however great his character, and admired his conduct before, yet *now* is he looked on as a *pest* amongst men. This truly is the cross of Christ, and happy is the man who can glory therein. For a *good* man such as he was under his first character, some would even dare to die: but for a *righteous* man, such as he is *now*, whose transgression is forgiven and sin covered, who worshippeth God *in the spirit*, *rejoiceth in Christ Jesus*, and *hath no confidence in the flesh*, scarcely one will die. Hence have we a specimen of the enmity of man's heart against Jesus Christ and his gospel; and hence we may in a measure account for the afflictions and persecu-
tions

tions which attend all who truly believe the gospel.

But let not this antichrist, who denieth that Christ is come in the flesh, that he hath by his coming fulfilled all righteousness, and finished the salvation of his people, ever fright us from the profession of our faith; let all his objections and reproaches be disregarded by us, as the fruits of his enmity against Jesus Christ our Lord. Let the all-sufficient merit and glory of his person and atonement be ever valuable, ever dear to us.

There is an everlasting fixed jealousy deep rooted in the christian mind, of every work, word, or thought, lest it would be a competitor to Jesus and his atoning blood, nor can his eye spare, or his heart pity, whenever he finds the traitor out, but would with the Psalmist pray, *Let burning coals fall upon them, let them be cast into the fire, into the deep pits that they rise not again*, Psal. cxi. 10.

Is it true, that the spirit of truth, whether he reprove the world of sin, regenerate to God, or witness to the spirit of the believer that he is born of God, doth *in* and *by* all glorify Christ; then will it appear that the Father, in all his counsel and purposes, intended the glory of his Son. He designed it in creation, as creating all things *by him*, making him the first acting cause of all things, and *for him*, that he might govern all, as his rightful inheritance. He glorified him in permitting the fall of man, that

as sin abounded in them, he might exhibit him, as his much more abounding grace. He glorified him in their recovery, when he made him his salvation unto the ends of the earth. He glorifies him in all his dealings with man, as being now ascended above the highest heavens and filling all things, filling all the works and ways of providence towards us; and not only such, which are more chearing and delightful, but the more gloomy and dismal also: whether it is losses, the loss of health, or friends, or goods; whether it is crosses, all our ends, aims and endeavours frustrated; all the desire of our hearts denied us; tormented by bodily pains, wounded by evil tongues, hated and despised by all; adding to all this, the sharper trial still, the suspension of all divine comfort from the soul, attended with the fierce assaults of the enemy through fiery temptations, and the horrid ferment of a corrupt heart. How dreadful and afflictive soever all this may be in its nature, yea, coming on us as the tempest of a whirlwind upon a feather, yet may we fearless stand, for he that rideth upon the wings of the wind, Jesus, our Lord and God, filleth all things, so that we shall not be moved. He speaks to us out of thick darkness, he speaks to us out of the burning flame, he speaks to us out of the tumultuous waves, and his constant language is, *Be not afraid, it is I; yea, though clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitations of his throne.* He fills every
state

state and every condition wherein we are, and where *he* is, there is the fulness of grace and love. To know this, is to be *content* in every state wherein we are; but if we know it not, he is the same, and changeth not. He girds us when we know him not. And if at any time, through frightful appearances, we are driven as men to our wit's end, even there Jesus meets us, saying, *Be not afraid, it is I.* Nor can all our fears and ignorance turn his heart away, or alter the property of his grace. He filleth all things, need we wonder then that all things should work together for our good? O glorious grace! O stupendous love! shall we not learn hence submission to the will of our heavenly Father, since he always wills our welfare, and hath made Jesus to be all in all unto us! Herein is the Saviour glorified. In the glorious face, and fulness of this divine Lamb, the Spirit of Truth points out the evil of sin: Can any thing speak its heinousness more fully than that amazed and sorrowful heart of Jesus, when beneath its pressure in the garden it sweated showers of ruddy drops? Can any words or device of man paint the abomination in a truer, stronger light, than that bruised and swollen face, that head so pierced with thorns, that back so rent with scourges, those hands and feet so bored and torn, those deep vented sighs, those cries, tears, groans, and breaking heart-strings? all evidencing soul-pangs, yet unheard of, by reason of their inex-

plicable height, depth, breadth, and length; From hence the Spirit of Truth reproveth of sin and aggrandizes the offence, shews, from the all-sufficiency of his death and grace, the curse and evil of unbelief; and if this Spirit, in its reproof, influence and testimony, glorifies Jesus, let us beware of that spirit which would use arguments and means derogatory to the honour of Jesus, to convince, convert, or comfort man.

Is it true, that the Spirit of Truth, in all his operations, glorifies Christ? then all such operations as have a tendency to bury us in unbelief, either from a sense of our sinfulness and unprofitableness, or a doubtfulness of the all-sufficient merit of our Saviour's blood and death, cannot be the operations of the Spirit of Truth, because Jesus is not glorified. Whatever operations on the mind tend to puff up, to make us wise, righteous, holy, or powerful in our own esteem, cannot be of the Spirit of Truth, because it is a lifting up of the heel against Jesus, and a casting *off* our dependence on him. But whatever operating power and influence (upon our heart) tends to lead us to *him* for righteousness and strength, to *him* for wisdom and purity, to *him* for eternal salvation and comfort, shews us *his* glory, and endears him to the soul, yea, constantly leads us out of ourselves, to have all our hope and dependence on *him*; this is the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter: O let us hear his voice and know it, submit to his teachings,

teachings, and then will he guide us into all truth. And let us not limit him to particular texts of scripture, nor sermons, nor sacraments, nor prayers, nor meditation, as respecting the means or method made use of by him to honour and reveal Christ in us the hope of glory. The great question is, whether is Christ Jesus, our dear and only Lord, glorified, or not,? let him do it *with* or *without* means as used by *us*, as it shall seem best in his sight. Let us not fail to distinguish between the operations of the Spirit and the passions, in *ourselves* and *others*; in *ourselves*, lest when, having had our passions worked up, we conclude we are believers, such that know and enjoy much; but when we cool and find ourselves other men than we imagined, we deem God changeable, and the joys of his spirit fleeting; or else, as men awakened and recovered from drunkenness, we are ashamed of the raptures we seemed to be in, of all our swelling words, yea, of the whole of our behaviour; would fain hide us from ourselves, and from all before whom we had boasted of great matters; our faith and joys having left us to shame and confusion of face. Let us carefully make this distinction, lest, mistaking our passions for the operations of the Spirit of Truth, and being of a sanguine complexion, we go about to force things upon mankind which are contrary to the truth itself; or, if it happen to be the truth, the man of passions will assert either, as it comes on his

mind, with all the absolute positiveness of infallibility, will tell you, he will pawn his soul for the truth thereof, or that it is as true as JEHOVAH liveth; if you ask for proof, it is that he hath experienced it, or hath had it revealed to him; whereas, probably, it will not be many days before he is found, not only denying this, but asserting, with equal positiveness, what is diametrically its opposite: this is odious and dangerous, and always to be avoided by every Christian. A spirit which is positive, without proof, is a spirit to be suspected, as favouring more of passion than of truth.

Let us learn also to make this distinction in others, that, as we would not deceive ourselves, we may not be deceived by them, either by conversing with them, or by hearing their report; enquire thus by the spirit which is in you: are they, in their measure, judicious? Do they sing of mercy and judgment, or, do all their joy and comfort spring from scriptural and faithful views of Jesus, and of what he is made of God unto man? Are they consistent, not asserting with one breath, what they contradict with another? are they constant, in speaking of Jesus, and professing him? for *Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is not yea and nay, but in him is yea*. Do they aim more at sealing instruction upon the mind by scripture-proof and argument, than at raising the passions, by gesture, noise, change of voice into loud speaking, or unnatural tones? where

we can discern this, we have reason to conclude, that they are led by the Spirit of Truth, and not by their passions. But on the contrary, where we find them much in joy and transport, and but little in judgment, not having that scriptural and faithful idea of Jesus, from whence true comfort springs, not being able themselves to account for their joy, as to any view of divine love, from whence it should arise: where they are inconsistent and inconstant, *affirming* and *denying* the same thing, not abiding in one voice concerning Jesus: where the aim is more at the passions, than at instructing the mind, and building it up in the faith of the gospel; and that by artful gestures, unnatural sounds, much noise and vehemency of words: Where there is a profession of knowing by the Holy Ghost, and of being immediately directed by him (in things which come more particularly under the cognizance of reason) and that often contrary to common honesty: This, and the like, where we find it, speaks the passions of a corrupt mind more than the Spirit of Truth. Therefore it will be well, if we hold only *common* friendship and sociableness with persons of this character; holding ourselves in a readiness to do them good, when it shall please our Lord to make use of us to that purpose, but not to connect too close with such *who are given to change*, lest it should prove a trap and a snare unto us. For they think it right to be your *friend* to-day, and your *foe* to-morrow; to do

you a *good* turn one day, and an *evil* one another day; *to-day* hofannah, *to-morrow* crucify; and yet pretend to be directed by the Spirit through all. If this spirit (viz. their passions) calls them to any thing, they *ardently* follow it, trampling all moral honesty and engagements beneath their feet; and will not submit to the scripture rule and decision of things.

But the Spirit of Truth teaches judiciously, consistently, faithfully; blessed are all they, who are no longer governed by their passions, but are led by that *true* and *peaceful* Spirit, which always glorifies Jesus in all his operations and teachings.

I have before noted, that the revelation of Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of Truth, produceth its proper effects in every one who believeth his holy gospel; and that *this* consists in a deep abasement and abhorrence of ourselves, working to an eternal, inexplicable veneration for the name and person of our ever adorable Jesus. But then let us remember, by the way, that, as it is not every one who compliments Jesus with calling him *Lord* that enters his kingdom; neither does every one who professes self-loathing and abasement, know any thing of it, as it will plainly appear. Self-abasement proves itself in a second fruit, which is very visible and intelligible to man, and doth not consist in profession, or word only. Self-loathing and abasement supposes a real conviction of the evil of sin, and withal a right sense
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and understanding of the *root*, and various branches thereof, as *rooted* in the heart, and *sprouting* in all our works, words and thoughts, as the Lord testifieth, *that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. and *that the heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things*, Jer. xvii. 9. until we know that we are *carnal and sold under sin*, Rom. vii. 14. *in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing*, Rom. vii. 18. That whilst we serve the law of God with the mind, we serve the law of sin with the flesh, Rom. vii. 25. until we know that we are the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. and in self-loathing and abasement fall dead at his feet. And where-ever this is, according to the spirit and power of the gospel, it will produce this second fruit, an esteeming of *others better than ourselves*. We can no more judge nor condemn our brother, because we are very sensible we have nothing but what we have received. It is *here natural* to us to forgive the injuries done us. We are *here* preserved from hopeless sorrow and secret murmurs under the deepest calamities which befall us, or the most grievous slights put upon us. In short, a person truly exercised in *this*, can never fall far below his expectations, nor be much deceived in the course of this world. Should we *now* uncharitably censure our fellow-creature, the quick and powerful word of God would seize us—*Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?*
let

let him who is without sin cast the first stone at them.

Where there is true self-abasement the conscience will not admit of back-biting, evil-speaking, revenge, hatred, slander, and uncharitableness, because the true knowledge of our own hearts will *prevent* us therein; teaching us pity and compassion towards the most abandoned, yea, peace and fellow-feeling with all mankind. But where self-loathing and abasement is only in *word* and not in *power*, people can profess to know themselves, and yet hate their neighbour, backbite them, speak evil of them, slander them, uncharitably censure them, &c. as being worse than themselves; for, if they do not really think them worse than themselves, they sin grievously against the light, to judge and condemn them, where their conscience testifies their own worthlessness to such a degree, as not to admit of their being better than their neighbour; how like a two-edged and sharp sword doth God point his word against such as those! *Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest dost the same thing,* Rom. ii. 1. A person who professeth to know himself, and behaveth *thus* towards his neighbour, *turns judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock,* Amos. vi. 12. *Turns judgment into gall;* when instead of judging righteous judgment consistent with truth, and according to the love and spirit of the

the gospel, they judge according to appearances, according to the gall, bitterness, and rancour of a self-righteous and prejudiced mind. And as for the fruit of righteousness, which I have shewn to be self-loathing and abasement, and from *thence* peace, and love towards mankind; *that* they turn into *hemlock*, a noxious and poisonous plant, with which, having poisoned themselves, their heart is lifted up, and being swoln with pride and self-sufficiency, and ignorant of their own true state, they spit their venom with such zeal and fierceness, as if envy, malice, revenge, murder, and fury was the most demonstrative proof of being a real christian: such spirits as those, are not content with smiting kindly, and reproving, unless *their precious oils* break your head. Can such as those know what self-loathing and abasement is? if they do, what means this inconsistent, hateful, hurtful practice? do they not thereby greatly injure their own conscience, condemn themselves, and dishonour the Lord who bought them? truly this is so far from proving self-abasement, through the revelation of the Son of God, that it proves the *reverse* rather; pride, arrogance, and self-sufficiency, the natural and predominant qualities of a soul unacquainted with Jesus Christ. How foolishly they deceive themselves by calling *light* darkness, and *darkness* light! But let not *us* be thus deceived; for in the day of the manifestation of Jesus, the haughtiness of man is brought low, his pride abased, and the Lord alone

alone exalted. And if this is proved by a second fruit, as before-mentioned, let us remark, that true self-abasement excites to love, forgiveness, friendship, kindness, fellow-feeling and compassion amongst men, and as it is an everlasting stain upon the glory of all flesh, Jesus only remains to be adored, revered and esteemed of all his children. *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious*, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Precious in his name; *his name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love him*. The name of Jesus is precious, not only in its sound, or as that by which we distinguish his beloved person from all other beings, but great is the *mystery* of his precious name; he is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins; his name is expressive of the condition of his person. If he rightly bears the name of Jesus, then *hath he saved* his people from their sins; and if he bears that name for ever, then hath he saved them with an *everlasting* salvation. This is the name that gives glory unto God on high, brought peace to the earth, and good-will towards man. All his sacred names, whether the *Woman's Seed*, the *Shiloh*, the *Wonderful*, the *Plant of Renown*, the *Desire of Nations*, the *Branch*, or *Emmanuel*, are gathered into this unctuous name *Jesus*. This name however compendious, contains not only all his former names, but all the grace and glory revealed and pointed out by them, is at once exhibited in this new and glorious name *Jesus*. It is a name above

bove every name; every knee shall bow to it in heaven, in earth, and under the earth; yea, *every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 11. All that is called God, and that is to be worshipped, is known in this name. Now is the day come, when *there shall be one Lord, and his name one*, Zech. xiv. 9. *This name is a strong tower, the righteous shall run into it and shall be safe*. How chearing, how balmy, how valuable this name is to a christian no tongue can ever tell! it is a full confession of his faith, and a perfect *answer* given to every one who asketh, a reason of the hope that is in us. Would they ask us of what religion? we answer, *Jesus*. Would they ask us what proof we give of christianity? we answer, *Jesus*. Would they ask what righteousness we have? we answer, *Jesus*. What holiness? *Jesus*. What wisdom? *Jesus*. What redemption from sin, hell, and death? *Jesus*. What hope of eternal glory? *Jesus*. This name is an answer of faith, given by the christian, to men or devils, who would reason with him. How dry and tasteless is every book, sermon, and ordinance, which is not sweetned by this precious name! without this, the most admired oratory is but a meer croaking. How empty and flat the finest eloquence where this emphatic name of *Jesus* is not found! what is all the wisdom of words, and the enticements of speech, where *this* is not? what is all preaching, praying, reading, meditating on religious matters, where
this

this name is not the doctrine, the argument, the application, the petition, the conversation, yea, the anointing in all? I say, what is all, without this, but formality and dulness? Therefore is this name truly sweet and precious to every christian; the name of *Jesus* is written upon his heart.

Jesus is truly precious in his person to a believer, and that under two considerations, that of his *mystery* and of our salvation in him, and that of his *beauty* and powerful attraction.

He is precious in his *mystery* as *God-man*; wherein the Creator's marriage with the creature is exemplified: in which union, through his blood-shedding and death, we are made the righteousness of God, holy, pure, and without sin. He is precious as our durable riches and righteousness, as him in whom are all our treasures of grace and eternal glory.

He is precious, as beautiful, and of powerful attraction: Oh! he is *fairer than the sons of men*! He is *white and ruddy, the standard-bearer amongst ten thousand*! When we have but a glimpse of that *perfection of beauty* which dwells in him; we wonder, we admire, we love, we adore, and lose sight of heaven and earth in him! He becoming *all and in all* unto us; forgetting all things, yea, for a season forgetting our benefits and riches by him; we gaze upon *his* glory, and, through the views of *his* brightness, swallow large draughts of wonder, delight, love, desire, and joy unspeakable! we
forget

forget both our poverty and riches, and caught up into amazement at the beauties of his holiness, we are as those created on purpose to admire *him*! *his* glory, *his* beauty, *his* excellency, is all the language of our souls! without considering *our* knowledge, *our* faith, or salvation, we only now consider him, contemplate him, and cry, it is good for us to be here; wondering and silently admiring the untold beauties of that *dear Man* who died for us. Whilst the beamings of his beauty, warming and attracting the heart, at length burst our feeble souls with praise: Hail *Son of Mary*, hail, hail, all hail thou *Bridegroom* of the Church; hail thou *perfection of beauty*, who shinest out of Zion! Glory be to *Thee* thou beautiful Emmanuel! Glory be to *Thee* thou altogether lovely Lord Jesus! Glory and honour be to *Thee* my Beloved: *Thy head is as the most fine gold, thy locks are bushy, and black as a raven, thy eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set; thy cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; thy lips like lillies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh; thy hands as gold rings set with beryl; thy belly as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires; thy legs as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold; thy countenance as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; thy mouth is most sweet, yea thou art altogether lovely.* Glory, honour, and eternal thanksgiving, be to *Thee* thou lovely, beautiful *Son of man*, who art in the midst of the golden

den candlesticks, cloathed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about thy paps with a golden girdle; whose head and hairs are white like wool, as white as snow; and whose eyes are like a flame of fire; whose feet are like fine brass burning in a furnace; and whose voice is as the sound of many waters: who holdest in thy right hand seven stars, whilst out of thy mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword; and thy countenance as the sun shining in its full strength. Glory be to Thee O Lord. O how excellent the Person! how divine the beauties of our Jesus! In comparison of him all created glories are gross darkness, and the most refined beauty is deformity. He is indeed precious beyond description; and yet what we now see, is but darkly, as through a glass, but when we shall see him with open face, and without a cloud, what shall we see! what shall we feel! that our tongues dare not attempt to tell; nor is it possible that words should ever paint it, because it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but it is enough, that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; until then we express all the desire of our souls in a few words: We beseech thee shew us thy glory, let thy presence go up with us, and let all thy goodness pass before us.

He is precious in his atoning blood and death; where he is to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness, he is to us, the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. How precious the form, where he looks like he
had

had been slain ! and that his *sufferings, blood and death* are precious to the christian ; witness that sharp-sighted and burning jealousy in every true believer's bosom ; of all things in heaven and earth, lest it should take place of his precious blood, or join itself with it in the matter of our redemption and salvation ; and whatever we detect assuming these honours, whether they wear *earthly* or *heavenly* forms, we spare them not, but pursue them with anathema's to the lowest hell, as traitors to the King of glory. And *to* every sound and object, which would charm our hearts from this, let us shut our ears, our eyes, and resolutely abide by the fountain of his blood, and evidence how precious a crucified Jesus is to us ; yea, and in comparison of *this*, let us, with Job, say, *If I was perfect, I would not know my soul, but would despise my life.* In this sense, sacrificing *all*, whether *light, love, knowledge, faith, yea, all our goodness*, to the honour of *His* most precious blood.

He is precious in his gospel ; his gospel is his heart and nature transcribed to man. All who profess to preach the christian religion are in a measure sensible, that the gospel is the only valuable sound ; and therefore whatever they preach, each calls what he preaches, the gospel. Is preaching upon state affairs the gospel ? is the preaching of dry morals, or the rules of Seneca, the gospel ? is the preaching against the divinity and atonement of the blef-

sed Jesus, the gospel? or is it the gospel to make man a co-partner with Jesus Christ in the work of salvation? is the threatening mankind with hell and damnation for their sin, and promising them eternal life on the amendment of their ways, the gospel? or, is it the gospel to preach the necessity of *this*, and the *other thing*, as wrought *by us* as our own work, or *in us* as the work of the Spirit, for our salvation and eternal life? if the gospel is not only God's good word, or sayings, but as the angel declared, *tidings of great joy, which should be unto all people*, if it is to be distinguished from the *law given by Moses*, as that *grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ*, wherein does that, which I have mentioned, answer this character? The gospel is the revelation of the love of God unto mankind by Jesus Christ, in whom he hath destroyed our sins, and saved our souls, through his death and sacrifice; or, it is contained in these words, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*, 1 Cor. v. 19. and as the gospel thus exalts Jesus as the *salvation of God unto the ends of the earth*, and abases the creature; it is precious to the christian; it is a *joyful sound*, it refreshes and cheers the heart, and is a cordial to the fainting spirit: It is what a truly christian heart prizes above thousands of gold and silver: nor is there any famine they would so much dread as a famine of the cheering word. Until a person knows to distinguish it from every other sound, there
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will be no real satisfaction ; they will be expecting it in the *whirl-wind*, in the *fire*, and in the *earthquake* ; but when they have heard the *small still voice*, they cease from noise and clamour, and converse with Jesus in a calmer manner, in a more familiar way : the gospel, as the *wisdom and power of God*, recommends itself to their conscience, insomuch that they no longer look to the character of man, as learned, wise, or holy, to recommend the word unto them, and indeed here is the main difference between *such* who know the gospel in truth, and *such* who do not ; the *former* being taught it of the *Holy Ghost*, the *latter* receiving it from *man*. *Who so will lose his life for my sake, and the gospel, saith our Saviour, the same shall find it.* And, as all our power and excellencies are slain by the reception of the gospel ; we have the most reason to expect it amongst the people who are most despised, against *whom* are vented the most bitter invectives, calumnies and reproaches, especially where they endure them patiently and joyfully ; a true sign that they have lost their lives for Christ's sake and his gospel. Thus is it precious to the christian who counts himself no loser, though he hath lost all to win Christ and his gospel.

Jesus is precious in his people ; therefore were they of *old accounted of*, as the *only excellent ones upon earth*. When we once learn the relation between *Jesus* and his people, expressed in these words, *Forasmuch as you did it unto*
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them,

them, you did unto me, Matt. xxv. 45. And when Saul, madly breathing out slaughters against his children, was asked this question by him, *Why persecutest thou me?* Acts ix. 4. *Then*, and not until *then*, are we able to conceive aright of the children of God, and to set a proper value upon them; as it will plainly appear unto us, that Christ and his people are so truly *one*, that there is no meddling with *one* without the *other*. All the deeds, whether good or bad, done unto them are set down by Jesus, and confirmed in heaven as done unto him. All the flights put upon *them*, are but so many flights put upon *him*; *their* joy is *his*, *their* sorrow *his*, *their* temptations *his*, *their* griefs *his*, *their* troubles and persecutions all *his*.

Read, and tremble, ye smoaking fire-brands, whom nothing will satisfy but the destruction of his people: Ye children of violence, who oppress them, and always study to work them distress and anguish: Ye venomous and subtle spirits, who lie in wait for their halting, and by evil speech, with sly serpentine insinuations endeavour as much as in you to ruin them. I say, tremble when you read, that whatsoever you do unto *them*, you do unto the *Lord* who created you, and redeemed you! O horrible to consider then how he is treated amongst men! yea, and amongst such who profess to be his friends! Would you have it thought that you are mad against *Jesus*, and earnestly desire *his* destruction? would you have it thought that

that you study to load *him* with distress and anguish, and to lie in wait by evil speech and serpentine cunning to ruin *him*? God forbid, say you, that we should treat *him* so. But what will you do to acquit yourselves of it? the word of God finds you guilty, the Holy Ghost maintains the charge against you: Is Christ divided? or can you when you wound, distinguish the *head* from the *members*? doth not the harmony of the body teach us, that the *head* cannot be an idle spectator whilst the other *members* are a mangling, nor be insensible when they endure torment? The children and bride of Jesus are the most *tender* part of his body, they are the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8. which part is so quick and sensitive as not to admit of the smallest dust without intolerable torment; yea, when in the days of his flesh, he was buffeted, spit upon, and scourged, until his bones appeared through the bleeding furrows, yet he complained not, but endured it patiently, and unto the end prayed for his persecutors. But no sooner did the zealot Saul and his fellows begin to afflict his poor church, but as one awakened by the most exquisite torments, he cries out with the utmost fervour, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* why didst thou keep the cloaths of the men who stoned *me* at Jerusalem, why wast thou consenting to *my* death, and with a merciless and unrelenting eye, beheldst *me* dashed in pieces by the ponderous stones thrown upon
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my head, with all the furious rage of men, whose hearts were harder than the stones they threw? why didst thou drag *me* with spite and cruelty out of every house, and make havock of *me*? And is it not enough that thou hast treated *me* thus at *Jerusalem*, but that thou must pursue *me* to *Damascus* also, to bring *me* bound before the blood-thirsty priests? What have *I* done to thee? wherein have *I* offended thee, that thou puttest *me* to this *second* pain, by *far* more grievous than the *first*? constraining *me* thus to reason with thee, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? is it not hard for thee to kick against the pricks?* to fight against thy God, a potsherd of earth to strive with his maker? Learn hence, what a tender feeling Jesus hath of all the miseries and distress of his children. And O! would to God that every persecuting Saul, every envious, malicious, back-biting, slanderous, lying spirit against his people, could so effectually hear the Saviour's voice, crying to them, *Why persecutest thou me?* why art thou envious and malicious against *me*? why dost thou backbite and slander *me*? why dost thou so cruelly speak lies of *me*? But then some one will say, If we believed them children of God, we would not treat them so; but as we think they are not, they deserve such treatment. When a certain Jewish zealot, who thought that none but such of his own nation had any right to his love, hearing our Saviour enjoin us to love
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our neighbour, impertinently asked him who was his neighbour : (thereby making an anti-christian distinction, as if none were to be so accounted of, but such of his own nation, church and sentiment) He was answered in a parable, where, under the similitude of the Samaritan, he was taught that his fellow-creature, of whatever nation, church, or sentiment, was his neighbour. Moreover, should it be granted that your distinction is just, as you do not always know who are the children of God, or who are not ; you have no authority for your distinction : and when you have once acknowledged them such, nothing is more common than for you to call back the verdict you once passed in their favour, and to *condemn* whom you once *acquitted*, whenever you have received some ill impressions toward them ; and, blinded with prejudice and passion, you thus deal with them, tho' *contrary*, probably, to your own sentiment, and unto what you would have others think of you. But what then, you poor changing worms ! do you think God is such a one as yourselves, *justify* and *condemn*, just as you do ? I am persuaded, you would fain have him so, but for your happiness, and the happiness of those whom you condemn, *Jesus* is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. O *then* do not deceive yourselves with foolish quibbles, forasmuch as you have cause to fear, you wound and injure *Jesus Christ* in every *son or daughter* of

of Adam, whom you thus grieve and oppress. It is an eternal inconsistency for you to profess friendship to the *Head*, whilst you wound and vex the *members*; to profess love to the *Bridegroom*, whilst you hate the *bride*, and pour contempt upon *her* in any one individual of his children. To say, I abhor the thought of giving *Jesus* pain, and immediately pierce the *apple of his eye*. Consider these things, you that *eat up his people as grass*; feeding upon their sins until you are fat and strong, not ceasing to bite and devour, taking part with the *accuser of the brethren* against those whom God hath justified.

But unto every soul who hath a right apprehension of *Jesus*, *he* is precious in his people; and they know what it is to discern the body of the Lord, and not as those Corinthians, who having respect of persons amongst them, came unworthily to the table of the Lord, as though they could partake of that, and the *table of devils* also.

There is nothing so powerfully excites to brotherly love and kindness, yea, to universal kindness and compassion to mankind, as a gospel view of *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

Do we in heart believe that whatsoever is done to his *children* is done unto *him*? how tender shall we *then be* of grieving and oppressing them; can we then hate them, whisper against them, envy them, and uncharitably condemn them? O God forbid! it is utterly inconsistent with

with a true veneration for Jesus Christ. Can we see them hungry, and not feed them; thirsty, and not give them drink; naked, and not cloath them; in prison, and not visit them? Doth not he say, forasmuch as we *do it not to them*, yea to the least of *them*, we do it not to *him*? what a robbing of Jesus would this be, a keeping back from him what he hath given us in trust for the use of all his children. Are any of them despised, sorrowful, troubled on every side, and grievously tempted, and will we be shy of them, shun them and disown them? Will not this be to be ashamed of the humiliation of *Jesus*, and to leave *him* and forsake *him* in the day of his temptation, as the affliction of his people is a filling up of the sufferings of Jesus which are behind? Let us not stumble at *him* now, as sundry did, on the *first* day of his distress; but a soul, who glories in his humiliation, and draws all his comfort from those deep *wells of salvation*, can never be offended at him, in his despised suffering members, as he will, under every form and appearance, be precious to all such.

He is precious in his children to every one who walketh in the light, for there we love our brethren, *and see none occasion of stumbling in them*. Whosoever can see Jesus as *he is*, can see his children like him; for the King's daughter is all glorious within. O happy, happy spouse and bride of Jesus! whom God loves, for whom Jesus hath died, whom an-
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gels with joy attend. Let my tongue for ever cleave to the roof of my mouth, ere I speak evil of *Thee*; and let my right hand forget its cunning, ere I grow weary of waiting upon *Thee*, or of being an useful, as I am a living member in *thy* body; or ere I cease to deliver *Thee* affectionately and faithfully, the whole of every message our common Head and Husband shall intrust me with to *thee*; for in *thee* I behold thy Husband's beauty, love and grace, yea all the glories of that eternal redemption and salvation, which *He* obtained for *thee*. Therefore, I summon all my powers to join with *thee* in ascribing all praise, might, majesty, dominion, honour, power, and glory, unto *Jesus*, the Lord of life and glory, in time and to eternity. *Amen.*



F I N I S.